THE SACRAMENTS AND THE COMMANDMENTS

SKELLY

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THE SACRAMENTS AND THE COMMANDMENTS

DISCOURSES ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS

BY

THE REV. A. M. SKELLY, O.P.

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I

DISCOURSES ON THE SACRAMENTS

THE SACRAMENTS

"You shall draw waters in joy out of the Saviour's fountains.—(Is. XIV, 3.)

1. It was a beautiful figure indeed, and one that called up a pleasing prospect to the dweller in the parched and sultry south—that contained in the words above quoted from the canticle of Isaias. And it had reference to the good things that were to be inaugurated under the benign reign of the Messias.

Now, it was usual with the prophets when they announced to the people of their time events that were to happen in the distant future, to make allusion to well-known facts in the history of their nation. This they did for two reasons: first, to recall to their minds with gratitude or fear God's providential dealings with them in the past; and secondly, to make these events a sign and an assurance of the accomplishment of the prophecies made by the same God through their ministry.

But to what event in the history of the Jewish people do the words of this passage refer, and what are the good things promised under this beautiful figure: "You shall draw waters in joy out of the Saviour's fountains"?

Well, dearly beloved, the event alluded to by the prophet is one that occurred to the people of God shortly after their delivery from the bondage of Egypt. And it is told in the book of Exodus that, while they were

wandering in the desert, they came to a place where there was a great scarcity of water. The people were in distress, and appealed to Moses to procure them wherewith to quench their thirst and save them from the miserable death that threatened them. And Moses gathered the whole multitude of the people together, and, after reminding them of God's goodness in delivering them from the tyranny of the Egyptians and of the innumerable other proofs of His merciful providence towards them, he struck with his rod a great rock that stood in the midst of the desert; and behold, to their great astonishment and joy, a fountain of delicious water issued forth to satisfy their thirst and fill the camp with gladness.

The Saviour's fountains prefigured in the prophecy are none other than the Sacraments of the Catholic Church—fountains that have their source in the inexhaustible reservoir of the Sacred Heart, "and the rock was Christ." And the waters that we are permitted to draw with joy therefrom are the graces of the Redemption, salutary waters which wash us and refresh us and produce in us a true justice. For Christ is indeed, according to the Apostle, "the spiritual rock," lifted up in the desert of the world, the only source of supernatural life left us after the cistern of original justice was broken by the fall of man.

2. And now, since the Sacraments are so many fountains of divine grace springing up for us in the Church through the bounty of the Saviour, "welling up into life eternal"; and since the outpouring of the graces of the Sacraments may be said to make up the life of the Church during her pilgrimage on earth, it is above all things desirable that we should have a thorough knowl-

edge of their nature and of the dispositions required for their worthy reception.

I purpose, therefore, with the help of God, to give you a course of instructions on the chief points relating to the administration and worthy reception of the Sacraments.

And let me bespeak on your part, dearly beloved, an attentive hearing of those things so necessary to be known and practised by you during life; things that have so important a bearing on your welfare here and hereafter; an attention that will be shown by your numbers in coming to the lectures, and by the intelligent interest you will show in their treatment.

3. First of all, we shall inquire into the nature of the Sacraments of the New Law, and how they differ from those of the Old. What, then, are the Sacraments?

The Sacraments are, as the Catechism tells you, so many "outward," that is to say, "sensible signs instituted by Christ to give grace"; or, if you will, they are so many "visible signs of invisible grace instituted by Christ for our justification and sanctification." They are signs; for, besides the thing they represent to our senses, they make known to us an invisible grace which is communicated to our souls. "They," says St. John Chrysostom, "exhibit one thing to the eyes, another to the mind;" they are "external signs," signs which fall under our senses. We see the action of the minister of the Sacrament; we hear the words he pronounces. This act and these words signify, and furthermore produce in the soul of him who receives the Sacrament, a grace which we can not see. These signs were instituted by Christ. For a Sacrament is not a natural sign of grace, but an arbitrary one, which denotes grace and operates

it, only dependent on the will of God, who instituted it for this purpose.

These signs denote and operate our sanctification; that is, they make us holy and agreeable to God, whether it be by bestowing on us the life of grace which we had not before, or by increasing and strengthening in us the sanctifying grace already in our souls.

4. The Sacraments of the New Law have this in common with those of the Old, that they are sacred signs which denote grace. For, the Sacraments of the Old Law signified not merely the legal and external holiness which they imparted, but also grace, which was communicated to men in anticipation, through the merits of the Passion of Jesus Christ. But (and this is an article of faith defined by the Council of Trent, Sess. 7, can. 2) the difference between the Sacraments of the Old Law and those of the New does not consist alone in the fact that the external ceremonies are different. Pope Eugenius IV, in his famous decree to the Armenians, makes another distinction and one more essential and important still, which comes from this—that the Sacraments of the Old Law, being only shadows and figures of those of the New, had not the power to confer grace. They signified merely that grace would be given us through the merits of the Passion of Christ. The Sacraments of the New Law, on the other hand, are not only signs that grace will be given, but they contain in themselves grace, and through the merits of Jesus Christ, have power to confer it on those who receive them worthily. "They did not cause grace," he says, "but only prefigured that it would be given through the Passion of Christ; but these, our Sacraments, both contain and confer grace on those who worthily receive

them." St. Augustine explains this difference in other words, which, however, signify the same thing. He says that the Sacraments of the Old Law and those of the New are not the same, "because the ones give us salvation, whereas the others only promise us a Saviour."

5. To sum up, then: the prophet Isaias, who lived nearly a thousand years before Christ, foretold, under the beautiful figure of fountains of grace and divine gladness, the institution of the Sacraments which we enjoy. The Sacraments are signs of grace, instituted by Jesus Christ for our justification. With the Sacraments of the Old Law, they denote grace imparted to the soul of the receiver, but in contradistinction to them, which are merely signs of grace given in anticipation through the merits of the Passion of Christ, they both connote grace and impart it of their own power and efficacy.

Let us adore the wisdom and power of God, who, under the weak figure of sensible signs, has given us the most powerful helps to our sanctification, and who, through their agency, perpetuates and makes universal the graces won for us through the Passion and death of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

THE GRACE OF BAPTISM

"Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."—(Matt. XXVIII, 19.)

I

1. In this simple formula we have the greatest of all mysteries, the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. It is a mystery of one God in three Persons: of a God enclosed in Himself; rejoicing in Himself; and alone and of Himself sufficient.

It is in this mystery in particular that we ought to avow with the prophet that He is "a hidden God" (Is. XIV, 15.) He is hidden not only from our eyes, but even from our mind, which can admire but not comprehend Him. And since speech should proceed only from knowledge, we must keep silence on the mystery.

But while we remain overwhelmed with the might of this glory and this infinite Majesty, let us not forget the great obligations we owe to the Blessed Trinity, in the name of whom we have been baptized. It is the duty of our ministry to make these known to you. For Jesus Christ in commanding His disciples to baptize all nations, ordained them at the same time to instruct them: "Going, therefore, teach ye all nations," etc.

Do you know, dearly beloved, what is the grace of

Baptism? And do you often reflect on the excellence of the gift that has made you Christians? Consider, then, that it has been called by one of the Fathers of the Church, St. Gregory Nazianzen, "The light of our soul; the change of our life into a better one; the reparation of our origin; and the greatest of all the gifts that God has given to men."

Yes, dearly beloved, those words: "I baptize thee" and those few drops of water that were poured upon your head the day of your Baptism are the greatest favor that God could confer on a creature. They are the principle of your predestination, the source of your salvation and eternal happiness.

Do not think that this is a mere rhetorical enunciation. It is a truth come out of the mouth of the Prince of the Apostles. "God," says St. Peter, "has given us through Jesus Christ a great and precious gift, a grace so great and precious that it renders us participators of the divine nature." (2 Pet. I, 4.)

Can anyone go farther than this? It follows from this that by the grace of Baptism we enter into society with the whole Blessed Trinity—with the Father, of whom we become the children; with the Son, of whom we become the members; and with the Holy Ghost, of whom we are made the temples.

2. I say, first, that through Baptism a Christian enters into society with God the Father, of whom he becomes the child. "Behold," says St. Paul, "you have not received a spirit of servitude and fear (as the Jews), but a spirit of love and adoption, which gives you power to say: Abba, Father." O my God, You are then our Father. You have adopted us into the divine family. We are Your children by adoption. And if children, why,

heirs also; heirs of the everlasting kingdom, and co-heirs with Jesus Christ. This is our quality, our being, our dignity, from the moment we become Christians.

In his Epistle to the Ephesians the great Apostle says the same thing in other words: "He (God) predestined us to the adoption of children through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the purpose of His will."

Know you not, dearly beloved, what have been the designs of God, and what He has done for us from all eternity? He has chosen us by an effect of His good will to render us His adopted children in Jesus Christ, in such sort that, as the Divine Word is the Son of God by nature, so are we by grace and adoption and the choice of a mercy all gratuitous.

Who can comprehend so great a favor? I am not astonished that St. John, not finding terms sufficiently energetic to express himself, cries out: "Behold, O Christians; open your eyes; dilate your hearts; see!" And what do you wish us to see, O great Apostle? "See what love the Father hath for us, that we should be called, and should be, in reality, the children of God," —His children not only by denomination or comparison, but really and in fact.

It is true this sonship is not visible to our eyes; but insensible as it is, it exceeds every other filiation. The child to whom you have given life is not so perfectly or so really your child, as you are a child of God by the grace of Baptism. In fact, as St. Paul says: The divine paternity is the ideal and the model of all those that are on earth. And yet, blind that we are, of all qualities there is not one that people esteem less to-day than that of Christian.

Worldlings dispute even to fury over a grade of

honor or over a ridiculous preference. They pride themselves in a contemptible manner on the respectability of their birth; but as for the quality of being a child of God, they undervalue it so much as to be often ashamed of it in the company of His enemies.

How different with the early Christians? They preferred the glory of being children of God to the greatest dignities in the world. "We glory," says St. Paul, "in the hope of glory of the children of God." "We are Christians," say they to the tyrants. "Behold our name, our quality, our profession." And we, my brethren, we despise a name so august, to borrow vain titles of honor which have worth only in the imagination of men.

Let us recognize our error. Let us acknowledge that the highest nobility that the world can boast of is to be ranked among God's children. We ought to be ready to sacrifice all things rather than lose this quality which is the first advantage that the grace of Baptism procures us.

3. The second grace of Baptism is to render us members of Jesus Christ.

We distinguish two bodies in the Son of God; the one a natural one, the other a mystical one. The natural body is that which He assumed in the chaste womb of the Blessed Virgin; a body formed by the operation of the Holy Ghost; a body formerly suffering and mortal, but now glorious and immortal, which He preserves on our altars, and which is crowned with splendors in Heaven. The mystical body of Jesus Christ is His Church, of which we are the members and Jesus Christ is the Head.

"He is the Head of the body of the Church," says St. Paul—a head in whom reside all the graces which

are communicated to us, and which flow continually on the children of the Church.

Now, it is to this Head that we have the honor of being united in Baptism,—with a union so close that when the Saviour speaks of it to His Apostles, He says: "Do you know what you are, and what I am? My Father is in Me; and I am in you." I am the same as My father; and this union, although infinitely different, is nevertheless the model of that which is between you and Me. Is not this a subject for rendering continual thanks to God? We are nothing of ourselves; but by the grace of Baptism we are united so closely to Jesus Christ that we become the members of His body; and, so to speak, one Jesus Christ with Him. "Admire! rejoice!" says St. Augustine: "We are made Christ." "Oh, I am entirely transformed into God by this Sacrament," cries out St. Gregory Nazianzen; "I am a man become entirely divine. I am no longer myself; I am another. Behold me a new creature in Jesus Christ. He has placed in me a celestial being, in place of the corrupted being that I received from Adam. He has recast me to make of me a new vessel, and without employing any other fire than that of the Holy Ghost, He has given me a form altogether new."

Oh, happy state in which the grace of Baptism establishes us! What follows from this, my brethren? That, having the advantage of being members of Jesus Christ, we ought to live in a manner worthy of Him. Let us not be dead and rotten members who deserve to be cut off from the body; but members righteous and holy, united to the body; living in God and for God.

4. The third grace of Baptism, is to render us temples of the Holy Ghost.

We can remark three kinds of temples where the spirit of God particularly dwells. The first is the heart of God. The second is the womb of the Mother of God. And the third, the souls of Christians who are the children of God. I say more, with St. Paul: It is not only their soul, but even their body. "Know you not that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who dwells in you?" that your eyes, your ears, your mouth, your tongue, your hands, your feet, serve the Holy Ghost, and are consecrated to Him?

This mysterious consecration was made in Baptism. As soon as this Sacrament was conferred on you, the Holy Ghost descended invisibly into you. And whilst in former times He could not remain in man, because he was flesh, He now makes His abode in that flesh, regenerated by the waters of Baptism.

II

1. Are you sufficiently instructed in this important truth, brethren? We read in the Acts of the Apostles that St. Paul, having met on the way to Ephesus some disciples of St. John the Baptist, asked them whether they had received the Holy Ghost. No, they replied to him: We are not even aware that there is a Holy Ghost.

I know, my brethren, that we ought to speak to you otherwise than to the newly converted. However, if I entered into the house of many of those who hear me, and if I asked them: "Have you received the Holy Ghost in Baptism? Do you know that you are His temples, and that He dwells in you by the grace of this Sacrament?" I fear many would reply: "We know

not what you ask, as we have scarcely heard Him spoken of."

Alas, my brethren, in whose name were you baptized? Is it in the name of Peter, or of John? These are only feeble ministers. Although it may be they were saints, they pronounced only some words. They poured only a little water on your heads. They performed only certain ceremonies. Open the eyes of your faith. You will see that the whole Blessed Trinity came into you at Baptism; that you are become the children of the Father; members of Jesus Christ; temples of the Holy Ghost.

2. O favor without equal! God has chosen you, my brethren, from your birth to give you the grace of Baptism, without any merit on your part. When you came into the world, the Heart of Jesus Christ was touched at your misery, and His adorable hands carried you to the sacred font; whilst His justice left millions of infidels in the mass of corruption.

As St. Paul says: "Not from the works of justice which we did; but according to His mercy He saved us by the bath of regeneration."

What mercy! Do you reflect on it, my brethren? How many are ignorant of this great favor and never think of it. Strange and criminal blindness! You know where your field, or your house, or your workshop is; and you know not what you are, and what the goodness of God has made you; that you are the children of the Father; the members of Jesus Christ; the temples of the Holy Ghost.

NECESSITY OF BAPTISM

"Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."—(John III, 5.)

1. In my last discourse I dwelt on the peculiar mercy of God to us in calling us to the Christian religion by means of Baptism. I pointed out to you the indelible character it impresses on our souls, and the privilege of intimate union with God which the Sacrament confers on us—that, in the words of the Prince of the Apostles, we are made by it "participators of the divine nature."

Let me impress on you to-day the absolute necessity of this Sacrament as a means of salvation. "Baptize all nations," says our Lord. Note that He chose the supreme moment of His last discourse before His Ascension to solemnly promulgate the law of Baptism, and to inculcate its necessity for the attainment of eternal life. It was not, indeed, on this occasion that He constituted it a Sacrament, but three years previously, when He Himself was baptized in the Jordan by St. John the Baptist.

We know from the Gospels that He sent His disciples to baptize the people even during the time of His public mission. But not till now did He make the reception of Baptism a universal law. As to what necessity that is, He Himself has taken away every shadow of doubt. "Amen, amen, I say to you," He says, "unless

a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

He has not constituted the same necessity for the reception of the other Sacraments. One may be saved who has not received Confirmation, and who does not intend either explicitly or implicitly to receive it. We are not bound under penalty of forfeiting Heaven to receive the Holy Eucharist, or Penance, or the other Sacraments. But we have here the word of Truth itself assuring us and confirming that assurance with a most solemn oath, that unless a man be regenerated by Baptism, he can not enter the Kingdom of God.

Now, Baptism was instituted primarily for the blotting out of original sin. For, as you all know, by reason of the disobedience of our First Parents, all their posterity had lost original justice, "being made unclean," as the Apostle says, and "by nature children of wrath." The gates of Heaven were closed against us. Nor could we be reconciled with God until the Blood of His only Son should stream upon us from the Cross.

And, as the Council of Trent tells us, "although our Redeemer died for all, not all receive the benefits of His death, but those only to whom the merits of His Passion are applied. For, as men, unless they had been born, propagated from the stock of Adam, would not have been unjust; so, unless they be born again in Christ, they can never be justified; since by that regeneration, through the merits of His Passion, grace is given them by which they are justified. Christ then died for all men, and by His death merited the redemption of all. But He willed that the Sacraments be the special channels of grace by which the merits of His Passion were to be applied to our souls. This is prima-

rily and most necessarily the case with Baptism, which is the gate that opens into His Church, and to the reception of all the other Sacraments."

Baptism, then, being necessary for all, it was becoming that its Institutor should have left on earth ample facilities for its administration, and this He has done. For, although by His command to His Apostles on this occasion He constituted them and their lawful successors, the bishops and priests to the end of time, the ordinary ministers of the Sacrament of Baptism; yet anyone can administer it in case of necessity.

2. Now for the valid administration of any Sacrament, besides the minister who performs the rite, two things are necessary, to which the theologians have given the names of matter and form. The matter or element is something which by the appointment of our Lord has received power to impart grace, and which is significant of the effect produced in the soul of him on whom the Sacrament is conferred; and the form is a set form of words determining the matter to produce the sacramental effect. Thus, in Confirmation, the matter is chrism, or a mixture of consecrated oil and balm, which is applied by the bishop to the forehead, and which is significant of the spiritual strength conferred by the Sacrament to fight bravely in the cause of Christ; and the form are the words pronounced by the bishop in the application of the chrism.

In the Holy Eucharist bread and wine are constituted the matter of the Sacrament; and the form are the words of Consecration pronounced over them by the priest, and which are none other than those our Lord made use of at the Last Supper when He consecrated bread and wine into His own Body and Blood.

So also in the Sacrament of Baptism, there are the matter and the form. The matter of Baptism is water. Remark that no other liquid will do but only water, according to the words of our Lord: "Unless a man be born again of *water* and the Holy Ghost, he can never enter the Kingdom of God." And the form of Baptism are those words taught by the Church, and handed down from the days of the Apostles: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," with the intention of doing what the Church does, or intends. It is necessary to be very exact, as the omission of even one word may mutilate the sense, and so invalidate the Sacrament.

Bear in mind that the water is to be poured on the head, and not on any other part of the body; and this for the reason that the head is the seat and centre of the sensible and intellectual faculties, the citadel of the soul, which is to be regenerated by the Sacrament. And in administering the Sacrament it is proper, though not strictly necessary, that the water be poured out three times, and in the form of a cross, pronouncing in the meantime, the words: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

3. In connection with this there is another thing that I would like to inform you of, the ignorance of which causes, alas, the loss of many precious souls. It is, or, at least, it has been a common belief that infants who come to light before their time stand in no need of Baptism, because, forsooth, the soul is not infused into the body till near the full time of parturition. Now let it be known to you that, according to the common opinion of theologians in our days, which opinion is borne

out by the experiments of scientific men, the soul is infused into the body of the infant at conception. Such presumably being the case, that soul is already tainted with original sin, and consequently has need of Baptism; and were the child by any mischance to die, it would be lost eternally; it would never attain to eternal life with God. Therefore, while there is any sign that such an infant is yet alive; or, rather, unless it shows unmistakable signs of death by putrefaction or otherwise, it should be baptized, at least conditionally.

Another thing that eminent medical men inform us of is, that the number of infants who are born at such a period that they cannot live is in the proportion of one to every eight or less that are conceived. Were you then rightly informed, you, mothers and fathers, and all you to whom the knowledge of those things is necessary, how many souls redeemed by Jesus Christ now defrauded of their birthright to the enjoyment of God, could have been saved!

4. Take home this knowledge with you, my dear brethren, and if occasion should offer, make sure that no soul shall be lost through your fault. An infant is capable of Baptism from the instant that the soul is joined to the body. This union probably takes place at the moment of conception. Through the many accidents of life, the eternal salvation of such souls is endangered. No infant that dies without Baptism can be saved. "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he can not enter into the kingdom of God."

It behooves all, finally, to know the proper matter and form of Baptism; to know how to administer the Sacrament validly, becomingly, and reverently. You

are to pour water on the head of the person to be baptized, saying at the same time: "I baptize thee, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

CONFIRMATION

I

1. It becomes my duty to address you this morning on the second of the Sacraments, Confirmation.

In reference to this Sacrament, a curious question was put long ago by the bishops of Spain to Pope St. Melchiades. They asked to be informed which was the greater, the Sacrament of Baptism or that of Confirmation; and to their inquiries the Pope replied: "You ask, Venerable Brethren, to be informed by us which is the greater Sacrament, the imposition of the hands of the bishop, or Baptism. Know," he says, "and hold this for certain; that the one and the other is a great Sacrament."

Confirmation is allotted second place among the Sacraments, not by reason of the time when it was instituted; for it was among the last in this respect; nor yet by reason of the order in which it is generally received by children in our day. For Penance and the Eucharist are frequently received earlier in life than Confirmation; but because it is looked on as the complement of Baptism and as such was formerly conferred immediately after the reception of that first Sacrament.

2. It might be asked, since the gifts of the Holy Ghost are received in Baptism, together with sanctifying grace and the infused virtues: what necessity is there for this special Sacrament of Confirmation?

We shall be better able to understand this if we consider the analogy which the Sacraments have with the means given us for the perfection of our physical and social well-being. Let me explain this. As, dear brethren, there is an analogy, a likeness, between the life of the soul and that of the body; between our spiritual and eternal well-being, and that which pertains to us physically and socially: so, there is an analogy between the means given us by God for the attainment of the perfection of the spiritual life, and those that are necessary for our temporal well-being. Now, as in order to arrive at the fullness of our corporal life, we have need not only of being born, but also of growing to the perfection of manhood or womanhood: so, also, in order that we may arrive at the fullness of the spiritual life and become perfect Christians, we have need of not only being born spiritually by Baptism, but also of being strengthened, and of growing to the fullness of the spiritual life, which we do by the graces received in the Sacrament of Confirmation. Hence, Pope St. Melchiades in his reply to the Spanish bishops said: "The Holy Ghost, who comes down upon the waters of Baptism on a healing mission, in the blessed font confers a full remission of sins: the Same in Confirmation gives an increase to the graces received in Baptism. In Baptism we are born again to the spiritual life: after Baptism we are strengthened for the spiritual fight. In Baptism we are cleansed: after Baptism we are made strong." Hence, the necessity of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

In this analogy, there is pointed out to us one of the special effects of Confirmation: and that is, to confer on us the plenitude of spiritual power, so that we may be enabled to fight the battle of life, and successfully

resist the onslaught of the enemies of our souls. This effect is made evident in a very striking manner to anyone who studies the history of the Apostles as furnished by the Gospel.

Those men were early in our Lord's public career received as children of the Church. The waters of Baptism which they were privileged to confer on others were doubtless poured upon themselves. They were admitted to a special familiarity and companionship with our Lord. They shared His labors; were the objects of His tender solicitude; were admitted to long and special conferences with Him. With what divine solicitude did He not provide for their spiritual welfare? He Himself taught them by word and example during the three years of their relations with Him.

And yet, with what results? After all the solicitude of the Saviour, after all His care and tenderness, they showed themselves but as children in virtue. They had all the faults that children usually disclose in their exhibitions of character. They were vain, and even at the moment of our Lord's Passion, though the Master had warned them that a catastrophe was at hand, they occupied themselves solely with disputing among themselves as to who should be superior when the Master would be removed from them. They were foolish and slow of heart to believe even the plainest truths of our religion. Their worldly minds could not understand after all His lessons the mystery of their vocation or the message of Jesus Christ to men.

Even on the night of His Passion, and, again at the moment of the Ascension, they inquired if He were not about to inaugurate the glorious temporal kingdom foolishly expected by the Jews. When the storm burst on

the Saviour, the most trusted of His disciples are found indulging in shameful slumber. In the hour of trial one is found a traitor; another, the most zealous, grows pale at the accusation of a servant maid, and declares with an oath that he does not know his Master. All timidly abandon Him and save themselves by flight. Even after the trial is over, and after they have the full assurance of the Resurrection, they are timid and hide themselves in a closed and barred chamber, for fear of the Jews.

But after the great day of Pentecost has arrived, after the grace of the Holy Ghost has been poured upon them and they have received the effects of the Sacrament of Confirmation they are animated with a new spirit. They are no longer children. They are as men arrived at the plenitude of the spiritual life and power. They are as men made drunk with the strong wine of grace which energizes in their souls and carries them to acts of unheard of heroism and zeal. From that hour the feebleness and pusillanimity of childhood have passed away. Their minds are filled with a new light. They are as warriors that go forth to subdue the world to the faith of Jesus Christ. Neither scourges, nor prison-cells, nor the opposition of the powers of the world, nor hell itself can stop the onslaught of their ardent zeal. Continents are too small for the exercise of their Apostolic fervor. Communities and nations will be welded into one grand Christian society by the power of that grace which stirs in the hearts of the Apostles and makes them heroes in the name of Christ. Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia; Pontus and Asia; Phrygia and Pamphylia; Egypt and the parts of Lybia about Cyrene; and strangers of Rome; Jews, also, and proselytes;

Cretes and Arabians; the men of all nations will hear a doctrine that was never heard before; and the twelve fishermen of Galilee will tell in all languages the wonderful works of God.

Such were the effects of the grace of Confirmation in the hearts of the Apostles; and such they are still, though in a less marked way, or rather with less exterior show, in the hearts of those who receive this Sacrament worthily and with due preparation. It confers on us the plenitude of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, by which we are endowed with new instincts to discover and apprehend spiritual and eternal things, and are enabled to achieve victories over our spiritual enemies and our passions, no less signal than those the Apostles gained long ago over the opposition of the world.

3. In connection with this let me here remark briefly a thing you may have noticed, but which you may not all have got the key to the explanation of. It is this. In your daily intercourse with those who do not belong to our religion you may have noticed in them a strange incapacity to comprehend the plainest truths of our holy faith—things that appeal to you with a clearness approaching the evidence of reason. You may have further remarked in them a strange inability to apply themselves to things that belong to the spirit—a want of the supernatural instinct which leaves them disposed solely for the study and appreciation of things that belong to this world.

This dullness of mind in regard to spiritual things, so manifest in those who are not of our faith, this slowness of heart to penetrate supernatural truths, will not appear unaccountable to you if you consider that God has endowed you with the spirit of discernment—a light

totally superior to the natural power of the mind, and has implanted in your will an instinct for the appreciation of supernatural things, which your less-favored Protestant neighbor has not, and the absence of which makes him incapable of understanding and appreciating the things which this light and this instinct make to you not only possible but easy and agreeable. Whence comes this grace?

It comes, primarily, from the theological virtues infused into your soul by Baptism, a Sacrament which your Protestant neighbor, maybe, has not received validly at all; which virtues have been developed in you by a Catholic education and the reception of the Sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist; but it comes especially and in a most marked way from the gifts of the Holy Ghost conferred on you in Confirmation. The powers of your soul have been immeasurably aided and illuminated by the reception of these gifts. Your mind has been illuminated by the four intellectual gifts of wisdom, understanding, counsel, and knowledge. Your will has been strengthened and perfected by fortitude and piety. Your whole soul has been enriched by a reverential fear of the Lord, which keeps you ever disposed to fulfill His holy will.

And even though your Protestant neighbor may have received the gifts of the Holy Ghost in Baptism; yet, he has received them only after the manner of a child who is still weak, whose faculties are undeveloped; even as in babyhood, the members of the body, as well as the mental faculties, are undeveloped and rudimentary, and unable to exercise perfect action.

The baptized Protestant endowed with the infused virtues is in a state such as were the Apostles before

the descent of the Holy Ghost; and, hence, his dullness of mind, and slowness of heart to believe. He has received but the graces of childhood; whereas you by Confirmation are gifted with supernatural instincts and the intelligence of one arrived at the state of mature manhood. In a word, you are enriched with the graces proper to the Sacrament.

II

There is another aspect in which it is good to look on Confirmation; *viz.*, as a Sacrament which increases sanctifying grace in the soul. To be precise, Confirmation is one of the Sacraments that are called, "of the living." It is a Sacrament of the living; that is to say, it presupposes the supernatural life of grace already existing in the soul of those who are permitted to receive it. It is a Sacrament that confers supernatural strength. Now, as in the natural order one must live before he can gain strength and grow to the fulness of manhood or womanhood; so, also, Confirmation, which gives spiritual strength, presupposes as a disposition, not only the spiritual birth of Baptism, but also that the soul lives the life of sanctifying grace, and that it is free from the spiritual death of mortal sin.

But even when the soul is dead; when it is in the state of mortal sin, Confirmation can, on occasion, even as can the other Sacraments of the living, confer spiritual life. For all the Sacraments confer grace, as it is said, *ex opere operato;* that is, from the very fact of their reception, and nothing can resist this effect, save an indisposed will—a will that preserves an affection for mortal sin.

Suppose, therefore, a person presents himself for Confirmation in the state of sin, but unconscious of his being in that sad state, and with the disposition of imperfect contrition. Confirmation is from its very nature intended to cause an increase of sanctifying grace in a soul already living. How can it cause an increase of that which does not already exist? The irresistible efficacy of the Sacrament (and the same may be said of the Eucharist, of Extreme Unction, of Holy Orders, of Matrimony)—the irresistible efficacy of the Sacrament pours its flood of life-giving and sacramental grace into the soul, even as the sunlight floods an apartment from which the shutters have been removed, warms it with a new life of sanctifying grace, and rejoices it anew with the infused virtues and the fullness of the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

Let me observe, however, that though Confirmation blots out mortal sin, this does not dispense from the confession of such sins afterwards if they are remembered. For confession is a law imposed by Christ on all those who have sinned mortally after Baptism.

III

There is a third consideration which I must not pass over in the exposition of this Sacrament. It is, that by Confirmation we are incorporated in that grand army whose Captain is none other than Jesus Christ. At Confirmation, when the bishop confers the Sacrament, after he has extended his hands and called down the Holy Ghost, he takes the holy chrism and anoints with it the candidate for the Sacrament, as a sign of the grace of the Holy Ghost. At the same time he pronounces the

formula: "I sign you with the sign of the Cross, and confirm you with the chrism of salvation; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." What is the meaning of these mysterious words, and of this striking act of the bishop?

It signifies that by that sacred form of words the recipient is enlisted into the ranks of the soldiers of Jesus Christ—that he has received the strength to fight bravely in defense of truth and virtue, and even to the shedding of his blood, for the confession of the faith. His body is marked with the sign of the cross, even as the soldier is clothed in the uniform of the country in whose service he enlists; and the cross upon his forehead is the efficient sign of the indelible character of the Christian soldier which is impressed upon his soul, the device of the august Leader under whose banner he purposes to serve.

In fact, dearly beloved, Confirmation is one of those Sacraments that impress a character upon the soul, the character of a soldier of Jesus Christ.

In Baptism, we received the character of children, and we were adopted into the family of the God-head. We were gifted with all the privileges of the children of God, even with the privilege to apply to Him the honorable title: "Abba, Father."

But in Confirmation we attain to the fullness of spiritual manhood or womanhood, and are endowed with the gifts of the Holy Ghost in their fullness.

What a glorious character, this, my brethren, with which we are marked in Confirmation, and what zeal should animate us in the discharge of the spiritual functions that accompany it? Like the great Apostle, we should be able to cry out in loyalty and zeal: "I know

nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified, in whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world;" and "Nothing shall separate us from the charity of Christ; neither tribulation, nor distress, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor danger, nor persecution, nor the sword." Nay, our whole ambition, after the grace of Confirmation, ought to be to become identified with Jesus Christ, so that our lives, our persons, our whole being, will be united to Him. We should be able to say: "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me"; and: "I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angel, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord."

Let this spirit animate each one of us who have received the character of soldiers of Jesus Christ in Confirmation; so that till death we shall show ourselves loyal soldiers of the great Captain, who by His Cross blotted out the decree of death that was written against us, and overcame the world.

THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

"He hath made a remembrance of His wonderful works, being a merciful and gracious Lord, He hath given food to them that fear Him."—(*Ps. CX, 4.*)

1. In these words taken from the Office of the Blessed Sacrament, our Holy Mother the Church rejoices in the possession of her greatest treasure, the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. "Our God," she says, "being a merciful and gracious Lord, in this Sacrament hath made a remembrance of His wonderful works." All the great works accomplished by God in times past for the benefit of mankind are here brought to our remembrance, are reproduced in a far more admirable manner in this, the greatest of His mysteries—the most stupendous of His wonders.

God is wonderful in the power by which in the beginning He called forth this magnificent universe with all its coordinated forms of being, life, sense, and intelligence, and set in order the springs of action by which all things move at the bidding of His will. And behold in the Most Holy Eucharist greater wonders of omnipotence in that He has given power to a creature to call down from His throne of glory the Lord of the universe, and to confine to definite space Him whose immensity fills the whole earth.

God is wonderful in that providence by which He watched over His chosen people in the desert, supply-

ing them for forty years with manna for their nourishment—and here we have the Living Bread come down from Heaven to nourish us during our exile in this vale of tears.

The wisdom of God is wonderful—that wisdom by which He devised a means for the exaltation of man after he had shattered His image within him by sin, and to the astonishment of the whole court of Heaven God Himself is seen to assume human nature in the Incarnation. And behold in the mystery of the Eucharist greater wonders of wisdom and condescension, wherein we see the same God Incarnate unite Himself to each one of us personally that we may be made divine.

God is wonderful in the love which impelled Him to offer Himself the Victim of atonement for our sins, and to die as a malefactor on the cross. In the mystery of the Eucharist the same God is offered in daily sacrifice on our altars, not now for our Redemption, for that was abundantly purchased for us on Calvary, but in order that the graces purchased for us on Calvary may be applied to our souls.

2. What is the doctrine of the Church concerning this Sacrament, which she styles the memorial of the wonderful works of God?

That doctrine is clearly expounded by the Apostle of the Gentiles in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, where he treats at once of its institution and its end. "For, lo!" he says, "I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread, and giving thanks He broke and said: 'This is My Body which shall be delivered for you; this do for the commemoration of Me.' In like manner also the Chalice

after He had supped, saying: 'This Chalice is the New Testament in My Blood; this do ye as often as you shall drink for the commemoration of Me. For as often as you shall eat this Bread and drink the Chalice you shall show the death of the Lord until He come. Therefore, whosoever shall eat this Bread or drink the Chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and the Blood of the Lord. But let a man prove Himself, and so let him eat of that Bread and drink of the Chalice; for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the Body of the Lord.' " (1 Cor. XI, 23.)

Christ, then, in the last hours of His life on earth, "the night in which He was betrayed," left us a pledge of His undying love by giving us Himself in the Sacrament of the Eucharist. And whilst the Apostles were at table with Him, He took bread and wine, blessed them, and gave to them, not now as bread and wine, but as changed into the substance of His own most precious Body and Blood. "Take and eat—this is My Body—that very Body that shall be delivered for you." "This is the Chalice of the New Testament in My Blood, that very Blood that shall be shed for you and for all mankind unto the remission of sins." And that His act might not be a transitory one, an act limited to a particular time and place, in that same hour He instituted for the perpetuation of so great a Sacrament the most sublime order and dignity that ever was created among men—the priesthood of the Holy Catholic Church. "Do this for the commemoration of Me," He said to the twelve seated around Him, and on that instant they who were before but laymen were ordained priests for ever according to the order of Melchisedech, with power to

consecrate at any hour, by day or by night, bread and wine into His own most precious Body and Blood.

3. By the power of the words of Consecration, then, words which are the same as those our Lord made use of at the Last Supper, we have in the Eucharist the identical Body and Blood of Jesus Christ—the same that were formed of the blood of the Virgin Mary and that were offered for us on the Cross—the same Body and Blood are truly there, but after a different manner. Christ whilst He lived on earth existed in a suffering state. In other words, He was, while on earth, subject to pain and sorrow. He felt the inclemency of the seasons as we do; He was subject to hunger, and thirst, and pain, and misery; His Body writhed under the lash of the executioner, and His Soul was filled with grief in the Garden of Gethsemani, and He was sensibly afflicted at the reproaches of men.

But in the Blessed Eucharist it is not so. The Body of Christ is here in its glorified state, and after a spiritual manner. It is, moreover, perfect and entire under each species. Consequently, under the appearance of bread, there is contained the precious Blood in the Body, and under the appearance of wine the sacred Body is contained together with the Blood.

4. With the Body and Blood the Soul of Christ must necessarily be. For the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist are His glorified, His living Body and Blood, and as a further consequence is present also the Second Person of the adorable Trinity, to which the Sacred Humanity is hypostatically united.

Again, by indwelling, as theologians say, the other Divine Persons of the Trinity are also present. For, the Three Divine Persons have but one and the same in-

dividual nature, and all three are but one God. In this holy institution, then, we have present Christ, God and Man and the whole God-head, who by His immensity fills the universe, but who is particularly present with the Sacred Humanity of Christ.

What an assemblage of miracles do we not admire in this one mystery; and is it not with reason that the Church, in the Office of the Blessed Sacrament, calls it the pledge of our Saviour's Passion; the memorial of God's wonders; the greatest of our Lord's miracles; our singular comfort in His absence; and the fulfillment of the greatest figures of the Old Law. Here, almighty power, and infinite goodness, and love, and mercy, unite in a most admirable manner, and the noblest and most powerful helps are given us for the attainment of salvation.

Oh, may we appreciate to the full the riches of God's goodness and mercy to us in giving us this great Sacrament, and may this appreciation urge us to a lifelong study and contemplation of its wonders. It will be to us a stay, a consolation amid the trials of life, and in death our strong hope and assurance of a happy eternity.

THE MASS

I

1. To the non-Catholic coming for the first time to our Catholic morning service, everything appears strange and unaccountable. Unlike the service he was used to, where the minister leads his congregation in prayer and psalm-singing, he sees here the priest facing a decorated altar, with his back generally turned towards the people, offering prayers in an unknown tongue, and going through a mysterious ceremonial.

At the same time his attention is drawn to the congregation; on their knees, silent, engaged in earnest prayer, and evidently taking part in the same mysterious rite, of which he knows not the significance or the end. What is the meaning of this wholly mysterious performance on the part of the priest and of the silent worshippers?

They are engaged, my brethren, in going through the great drama of the Crucifixion—the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Let me to-day treat of this great mystery.

The Mass is undoubtedly the most precious and august of the gifts with which our loving Lord enriched His Church before His departure from this world. This grand institution enables us, mortals and finite as we are, to offer to God a supreme worship—a worship worthy of Him; whilst it is at the same time a most efficient means for obtaining from Him all graces and

benefits. Instituted by our Lord on the evening before His Passion, the Mass is the link that joins together the Old Law and the New—the reality that fulfills the greatest figures of the Jewish dispensation and crowns the worship offered by man to God.

The Mass is, as you are aware, the great Christian sacrifice. It is a sacrifice; that is to say, it is an act of religious worship offered to God alone in protestation of His supreme excellence and sovereignty, and of our utter dependence on Him as our Sovereign Master and Benefactor. It is a sacrifice. Now sacrifice has been considered, at all times and by all peoples, as the most essential act of religious worship. And it is a remarkable fact that there never yet has been known a religion so sterile in its gifts—I correct myself; there never yet has been known a religion, save one and that is the Protestant religion, so sterile in its gifts as not to have some form of sacrifice; just as there never yet has been a people who did not cultivate some form of religion. And as we scan the history of nations back to the remotest ages, we behold the smoke of sacrifice rise over every hilltop and green wood; for by this external homage did they imagine that they offered to their false divinities the worship that was their due.

If from those peoples, "living in the midst of darkness and the shadow of death," we turn our eyes to the peoples spoken of specially in the Old Testament, again we perceive on all sides altars stained with the blood of victims. Cain and Abel offered sacrifice, as we know, though with dispositions, oh, how different! The patriarchs who lived both before and after the flood were the high priests authorized by God to offer sacrifice in the name of their families and dependents.

After the deluge, Noe tried to bring a blessing on the fresh earth by preparing an altar for the slaughter of victims to the glory of the God of his fathers.

Abraham, being come to the mount of Moriah, to sacrifice his only son, his dear Isaac, and being arrested by an invisible hand, thinks it his duty to supply for this famous offering by the sacrifice of a ram. Melchisedech offers bread and wine to celebrate the praises of the God of Victories. We see Isaac offer sacrifice to God. We see Aaron offer sacrifice to draw down upon his people "the graces of Heaven and the riches of earth." The children of Israel, instructed by Moses as to what sacrifices they should offer to the Lord, never appear in the temple without being laden with gifts and victims.

II

1. And now, dearly beloved, it is worth considering what were the motives that impelled men at all times to offer sacrifice, as this also will be the best explanation of the ends which Christ had in view in the august Sacrifice of the Mass.

It is, then, necessary to know that man, being made for God, and living only for Him, his general duty in the beginning was comprised in two things: first, to offer to the Lord homage as to the Sovereign Being. And because God is not only sovereign, but also eternal and infinite, he was obliged to render Him, as far as he was able, an eternal homage and an infinite oblation. Secondly, he owed to God gratitude as his Creator. And because He preserved to him at each moment the same being that He had given him at his creation, and every

day loaded him with new gifts; man's life ought to be, in His regard, a perpetual thanksgiving. These two duties would have formed our whole occupation if our first father had preserved his original innocence. "For that being so," says St. Augustine, "men, who would have been without sin, would have offered themselves to God as hosts, holy and without stain."

But, alas! man rose in rebellion against his Benefactor, and said to his Sovereign Lord, "I will not serve Thee."

He committed sin, and as a consequence of his sin the beautiful harmony that before existed in his nature was destroyed, and he became within himself a theater of conflicting elements. His nature, though not completely ruined, had yet received a most grievous wound. That clear and lofty intellect which before so discerned the beauty of heavenly things; that intellect which soared in contemplation of the Divine Being is now become dimmed and prone to error. That will, hitherto submissive to the law of God; that will all on fire with divine love, is now dissipated with affection for creatures and inclined to evil. The inferior powers of man's soul, his senses and his passions, which before his fall were the willing allies of his mind and will, now turn traitor and rebel. In a word, the equilibrium of our nature is destroyed, and an unceasing warfare rages within us, preventing us, of our own power, from attaining our end.

By Adam's revolt, therefore, we were shorn of our grandest privileges; and, hence, to these first two obligations there came to be added two others, the one, to appease God's anger kindled against us by our sins; the other, to acknowledge our dependence on Him for

special help to do good. Hence, in the state in which we are, we have four kinds of obligations to fulfill in regard to God—to honor Him as the Supreme Being; to thank Him for His benefits; to satisfy His justice outraged by our sins, and to implore His succor in our needs.

In the ceremonial law of the Jews God ordained, for the discharge of these four obligations, four different kinds of sacrifice—the holocaust or whole burnt offering, in protestation of His supreme excellence and sovereignty: the eucharistic sacrifice, or sacrifice of thanksgiving; the sacrifice for sin; and the peace offering, to beg of God help in their necessities.

The time being now come when all these types and figures of the Old Law were to be supplanted by the realities of the New, the Word declared by the mouth of the Psalmist that His Father had rejected them, and looked forward to the one true Sacrifice which alone had power to please Him, because eternal and infinite like Himself, and hence worthy of Him. "Sacrifice and oblation Thou dost not desire! Holocausts and offerings for sin do not please Thee, then, said I, behold I come to do Thy will, O God."

2. This is the Sacrifice first consummated on Calvary, which we, my brethren, are privileged to offer to our God. And what a sacrifice! For here are not offered the bodies of sheep and oxen, but the most precious Body and Blood of the only begotten Son of God.

O my brethren, how privileged are we, and how astonishingly great is this Sacrifice: Here on the altar of this humble church, there is daily paid a homage to God which attracts the rapt attention of the Blessed

Trinity. The same Body that was offered for us on the cross and the same Blood that was shed for our Redemption are again mystically offered for us.

By the power of the words of consecration the Soul of Jesus Christ is mystically separated from His Body and Christ again mystically dies—not now for our redemption, which was abundantly purchased on Calvary, but for our sanctification, and in order that the merits of His death and Passion may be applied to our souls.

Yes, the identical mystery of Calvary is continued. For, here is present the same Victim, the same Priest, the same God to whom the sacrifice is offered. Jesus Christ who gave Himself for our redemption, and who was Himself the Sacrificer, as well as the Victim, here, again, offers Himself to the Eternal Father. The choirs of adoring angels who then stood in astonishment at the sight of their God giving Himself to death for us, and who reverently gathered up the Blood that trickled from His Sacred Heart; as Mass is offered, throng around the altar and with wings folded in reverence bow in adoration of their sacrificing and sacrificial God.

Jesus Christ is the High-priest, offering Himself at every Mass. In His person the priest consecrates. By the power of His words the bread and wine are changed. The whole earth is the temple of the Lord. Calvary is represented on every altar. And we, my brethren, are witnesses, as were the holy women and St. John, of the death of Christ taking place in an unbloody manner on our altars, for the living and the dead. How literally are fulfilled the words of the prophet Malachi: "From the rising of the sun even to the going down of the same, My name is great amongst the Gentiles; and in

every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered in My name a clean oblation. For My name is great amongst the Gentiles, saith the Lord of hosts."

Yes, the name of the Lord of hosts is great among the Gentile nations. For, in our days, thanks to the universality of the Church, the Holy Sacrifice, "the Clean Oblation," is daily offered to God in every land over which the sun directs his course. And as each morning he appears in the Eastern horizon, gilding our church spires with his rosy light, he pays homage to Him who is the "Light of the World," and who is being offered in sacrifice within; and as he waves us his farewell kiss over the bosom of the western sea, he is but gone to be witness in other lands of the offering to the same God, of the Sacrifice of the "Clean Oblation."

Blessed are the days in which we live, dearly beloved, and "blessed are the eyes that see the things that you see." For I say to you, in the words of Christ: "Many kings and prophets have desired to see the things that you see, and have not seen them."

3. But, alas! what is it that we witness after all that God has done for us? A sight that would make the angels weep, and, if it were possible, cause Almighty God to regret that He had ever instituted the Mass. Do we not witness the Holy Sacrifice daily offered, and how many worshippers attend? Only a sprinkling of the people—a very few souls who have their salvation well at heart. But where, oh, where is the great bulk of the population who could and should show their gratitude to Christ by their presence while He is offered for us? Many, at home, lying lazily on their beds, passing the morning in sensual indulgence, or reading the newspapers at their breakfast

tables, whilst Mass after Mass is being offered at their very doors.

O my brethren, kindle your faith and devotion towards this most divine Sacrifice. Nourish within you sentiments of love and veneration for the Holy Mass. Show your gratitude to God for this most divine of all His gifts. Assist as if it were at the death of Christ. Come daily to the morning Sacrifice. Rejoice when you are able. Be present in desire even when you cannot physically attend.

For, "the Mass is the one great institution," as says the author of *The Following of Christ,* "which honors God; rejoices the angels; edifies the Church; helps the living; obtains rest for the dead; and makes us sharers in all that is good."

THE GRACE OF A WORTHY COMMUNION

1. Having established the doctrine of the Eucharist and propounded the mysteries of the Mass and of the Real Presence, I go on to show you the advantages to be derived from a worthy reception of this sacrament, and to this effect I will ask you to consider, first of all, the greatness of Him who comes to be our guest in Holy Communion.

He who communicates worthily possesses Jesus Christ in the midst of his heart. And, behold how this adorable Saviour Himself expresses it: "He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood abideth in Me and I in him!" How precious such a possession is we can somewhat realize by reflecting how great Jesus Christ is, and how His presence honors and ennobles us.

St. Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews gives us a noble description of the Saviour. "For," he says, speaking of Him as the "Word of God": "He is the brightness of His Father's glory and the express image of His substance," and as man, "He sitteth at the right hand of the majesty on high."

He it is that, as St. John tells us, dwelt from all eternity in the bosom of God: that was Himself very God, consubstantial with the Father, equal to Him in all things. He it is before whose presence the devils fled in fear and terror, confessing His Divinity. The same is He, before whose throne in heaven St. John saw the four-and-twenty elders casting their crowns in

adoration, saying: "Thou are worthy, O Lord, our God, to receive glory, and honor, and power; because Thou hast created all things;" and the four living creatures ceased not day and night, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and who is, and who is to be." See, my brethren, who it is you possess in your hearts when you have the happiness of receiving worthily the Holy Communion. What an honor, what a joy, to be able thus to receive Him, to commune with Him, to listen to the words of tenderness and consolation He whispers in our hearts, and to feel the ineffable peace and sweetness of His presence!

2. But this is not all. It would be a great boon to possess Jesus Christ at the moment of Communion. But by an excess of tenderness He wishes to do more; He protests that He will remain in us all our lives. "He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood, I will abide in him." He will abide in us; not as a mere acquaintance who has no interest in the person under whose roof he finds a welcome, but as a tender friend who wishes to unite himself to us, and to establish a personal union with us.

This is shown by the word which expresses the action by which we participate in the Body and Blood of Christ. It is called Communion, to express the fact that there is established a common union between the Son of God and the soul that receives Him—a union of the most intimate and abiding kind, and which is the culmination of the love and mercy of God towards us.

Nay, more, He will have us remain in Him. "He abideth in Me," that is, by drawing the supernatural life of our soul from Him, according to the words of the Gospel: "As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live

by the Father; so, also, he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me." For there is this difference between this Divine Food and the food that nourishes our bodies, that, whereas the latter is assimilated by us and becomes part of our system; the former, i. e., the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, which is the "Living Bread came down from heaven," assimilates us to itself, and we are made divine. And even as the torch, cast into the dry wood, warms it, ignites it, and transforms it into a kindred flame; so, Jesus Christ, who as God is a "consuming fire," received in Holy Communion, transforms our cold hearts, supernaturalizes them, and assimilates them to His own Divinity, by the perfection that He operates in us.

Is not this the effect that we ordinarily feel operated in us when we have received Holy Communion worthily?

Do we not feel our hearts warmed with divine love; our imperfections healed; our whole nature transformed and sanctified?

What may we not promise ourselves from the divine presence within us? Nourished with the adorable Flesh of the Saviour, we carry within us the glorious pledge of eternal life. And it is in this sense that should be understood the words of our Saviour: "He who eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood, hath life everlasting, and I will raise him up on the last day;" and again, "He who eateth this Bread shall live for ever."

3. Let me go on to say that our Lord in giving Himself to us in Holy Communion loads us with benefits. And that I may show you this, I will content myself with asking you to observe the difference between the Holy Eucharist and the other Sacraments. They were

instituted with the object of producing a definite effect; and they, in fact, produce one that is proper and essential to each; whereas, this one is an inexhaustible source of graces, and its virtue extends to almost everything.

Thus, the proper and formal effect of Baptism is to blot out original sin. The proper effect of Confirmation is to strengthen us in the faith. The proper effect of Penance is to remit actual sin; and so of the others. But the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, like the manna which possesed all tastes and was accommodated to all temperaments, without having a determinate virtue, is a rich treasury from which we can draw without ceasing, and which ministers to all our wants.

This heavenly nourishment produced in the early Church the most beautiful fruits of sanctity. The faithful "broke the Bread of Life daily," says St. Luke, with the result that "they had but one heart and one soul in Christ." Earth became as the reflection of heaven by the peace and charity that flourished among them.

It was, moreover, in times of trial, a support against the most cruel persecutions. When the storm burst over the early Christians, the pastors exhorted them to participate frequently in the Holy Mysteries. The faithful responded. "They thronged the sanctuary of the Saviour. They partook of the Holy Table;" and "they came forth," says St. John Chrysostom, "animated with a divine ardor which sustained them against the rigor of persecution." "Like lions, breathing fire," continues the same father, "their grand hearts became strengthened in proportion as the danger increased."

This heavenly nourishment was for many young girls in those difficult times a safeguard in combats the

most dangerous. Fortified with this "Bread of Angels" they are seen to resist the most pressing solicitations, renounce the most brilliant hopes, and join the honor of virginity to the merit and the glory of martyrdom.

This delicious Bread, this divine Drink was for the hermits of old a consolation in the midst of the deserts, and a relief in their fasts and austerities. Like that "hearth cake baked in the ashes," which so strengthened the prophet Elias as to enable him to "walk forty days and forty nights even to the mountain of God, Horeb," so Holy Communion sustained those men of God, as they climbed the mountains of perfection. In all ages of the Church Holy Communion was the stay, the sweetness, of the faithful of Jesus Christ.

You have yourselves, perhaps, more than once felt that it is only in the Sacrament of the Altar that we can obtain the strength needed to combat our vicious inclinations. That strength you find not in yourselves, but in Jesus Christ. Like St. Paul, we can all say: "Of myself I can do nothing"; but "I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me." How many times can you recall when this Sacrament was for you the one source of safety? How often did it not restrain you from sin, when the occasion, when your own evil inclination would have led you astray? What strength did you not find in it against temptation? What inspiration to good? What powerful helps in the practice of every virtue?

Oh, then, dear brethren, since our loving Saviour has poured out the "riches of His mercy" on us in this most Divine Sacrament, let us try to correspond with His benefits towards us. Let us venerate it with our whole hearts. Let us receive it often. Let us prepare to receive

it with worthy dispositions, that so we may attain to the fruition promised us; as He says, "He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood abideth in Me, and I in him." "He that eateth Me, the same also shall live forever."

DISPOSITIONS FOR HOLY COMMUNION

"Let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of that Bread and drink of the Chalice."—(1 Cor. XI, 28.)

I

1. The Apostle Paul takes occasion from the occurrence of some grave irregularities that had occurred in the religious assemblies of the faithful of Corinth to treat in his Epistle to that people of the mystery of the Holy Eucharist. And after having laid down the doctrine of its institution by our Lord on the evening of the Last Supper, he goes on to treat of the dispositions required in those who are privileged to receive it.

And, first of all, he denounces in dramatic language the crime of the unworthy communicant—a crime which he characterizes as most atrocious. "For," says he, "whosoever shall eat this Bread or drink the Chalice of the Lord unworthily shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord." What, then? "But," he continues, "let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of the Chalice."

"Let a man prove himself." In this sentence we are reminded at once of the sacredness of the Food we are privileged to eat, and of the dispositions we should bring to the Holy Table, in order that we may communicate worthily and with profit.

"Let a man prove himself." This proving of which

the Apostle speaks, refers primarily, according to the interpretation of the Fathers of the Church, to the cleansing of the conscience by penance—a cleansing which the Church ordains for all those who are in the state of mortal sin. And surely it is the clear duty of everyone, before he approaches so holy a Sacrament, to search diligently into all the avenues and byways of his conscience, and to purify his soul by holy penance, lest there be found therein the lurking demon of mortal sin.

2. But the words of the Apostle are to be taken in a far more extended sense. They refer not only to the absence of mortal sin from the soul, but, furthermore, to the presence of those dispositions which fit a man for the performance of so holy an action. What, then, are those positive dispositions that the Apostle requires in him who would profitably receive Holy Communion?

When I say that purity of heart is one of the first and most essential dispositions for communicating with profit, I speak not of a conscience exempt merely from mortal sin, but of a conscience exempt even from venial sin, as far as human frailty can permit. As the presence of mortal sin in our soul renders Holy Communion hurtful to us; so an affection for venial sin prevents the Sacrament from producing in us the fruits that it ought.

We read in the records of the early Church that, at the moment when the faithful were about to receive Holy Communion, the deacon, who according to the discipline of the Church at the time, was the ordinary minister of the Sacrament, cried out with a loud voice: "*Sancta Sanctis!* Holy things for the holy!" In repeating this formula it is as if he would say: "If anyone is not holy, let him not dare to approach this holy Sac-

rament." It is as if he would say that those who wish to share in the Eucharistic banquet ought not only to be entirely free from sin, but there ought also to shine in them a purity of heart all peculiar.

And of a truth, dearly beloved, with what purity of heart ought not we, who have the happiness of participating in the Holy Eucharist, approach so great a Sacrament? "The hand that breaks this Bread," says St. John Chrysostom, addressing himself chiefly to priests, "the lips reddened with this Blood, ought they not to surpass in purity the rays of the sun?" And, in fact, if our flesh in the Holy Communion becomes united to the Flesh of Jesus Christ; if our members are made the sanctuaries where this Divine Saviour deigns to repose, what ought to be our purity both of heart and body? Purity of heart, purity of body, which should exempt us not only from the foul vices of the flesh which the Apostle forbids us even to name, but which should make us strive to cleanse ourselves from even the least stain; purity of heart, purity of body, which forbids not only indecent acts, but even the least unbecoming words; purity of heart, purity of body, which obliges us to avoid all affection for and all occasions of sin. Purity of heart, purity of body, which obliges you, heads of families, for instance, and you older members of the congregation, to abstain from saying and doing anything that would disedify the younger members; and you, young girls and boys, not only not to band together for unlawful purposes, but even to avoid all indiscreet familiarities. Purity of heart, purity of body, which demands of you all, my dear brethren, to renounce this day and for ever those curses, those murmurings, those envies, those quarrels, that hatred, and

lying, and injustice; to renounce sincerely all those disorders which are contrary to the spirit of Jesus Christ and His Church. This is to prepare oneself for a good Communion by a proper purity of heart, which is the first disposition to communicate worthily and with fruit.

3. A second disposition and one not less to be desired than purity of heart, is a sincere humility. This is, according to the opinion of several Fathers of the Church, a disposition that is insinuated prophetically by Solomon in the Book of Proverbs, where he says: "When thou shalt sit to eat with a prince, conduct thyself with circumspection and consider diligently what is set before thy face." (Prov. XXIII, 1.)

What is this table of a prince of which the Wise Man speaks? What, if not the holy and mysterious Table, where in place of common food, we partake of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ? And what is it to consider diligently what is set before us, if not to be deeply impressed with the greatness of the food prepared for us, and to approach this Holy Table with a deep humility?

In truth, dearly beloved, you have need of only a little faith in order to enter into these humble sentiments; and it suffices to know that in Communion you receive nothing less than the God of Heaven in order to abase yourselves to nothing before Him.

And surely if St. John the Baptist, the illustrious Precursor of the Saviour, judges himself unworthy even to loose the latchet of his Master's shoe; how would he not have humbled himself if the Son of God had wished to be incorporated by him, and to become one with him, as He does with us in Holy Communion? Oh, let us often reflect on the honor that is paid us and to what

"a table" we are called. This reflection will serve to keep us in the most profound self-abasement.

When our Lord proposed to go to the house of the centurion to heal his servant, this man, pagan as he was, was so impressed with the sanctity of Him who was about to enter into his house, that he cried out with reverence and holy fear: "Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof; only say the word, and my servant shall be healed."

This disposition of humility was very conspicuous in the saints when they received the Holy Communion. Many of them, such as St. Francis of Assisi or St. Dominic, were so penetrated with their unworthiness that at the sight of the Holy Viaticum they collected all their remaining strength and cast themselves prostrate on the ground, with bodies which already manifested the deformity and pallor of death.

And we, my brethren, if we be unable to imitate the heroic humility of the saints, should we not at least enter into sympathy with the words of the centurion repeated by the priest at the moment of Communion, and say: "Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter into my soul!" *"Domine, non sum dignus."* We should repeat these words, I say, not from mere custom or habit, but with a profound respect and humility. "O Lord, I am not worthy to receive You." *"Domine non sum dignus ut intres sub tectum meum."* The weakness of my faith, my ordinary and daily infidelities to grace, the greatness of my sins, my little love; all these desolating things combined render me unworthy of a boon which I could never sufficiently esteem, if I could only comprehend it. *"Non sum dignus."* No, surely, I am not worthy; for when I should have as great love for you

as the seraphim have; when I should have done as much for my salvation as the saints have done for Your glory and their own sanctification, I would be still unworthy, not only to receive You into my heart, but to appear even in Your holy presence.

But, my God, my Saviour, and my all, since You have deigned to make Yourself my spiritual nourishment, I will have the hardihood to approach You. Washed and made clean in the salutary fountain of Penance, with sentiments of deep humility, I will approach Your Holy Table. Full of gratitude for Your past benefits, and of confidence in Your mercy, I will sing for ever the praises of Your goodness. I will receive the "Chalice of Salvation, and will call upon the Name of the Lord."

II

4. A last disposition in order to the profitable reception of Holy Communion is love; and this disposition is shown by the great desire, the holy impatience that we feel for the reception of the Sacrament. My brethren, if one of the best requisites for obtaining benefit from material food is to have an appetite for it; so, to have a lively eagerness for Holy Communion is to bring one of the best dispositions for its reception; since in this august Sacrament, the Body of Jesus Christ is for our souls what material food is for our bodies. This is a disposition desired of us by all spiritual writers who treat on the subject. They say that we ought to strive to feel in our hearts at approaching Holy Communion all those longing desires that the patriarchs gave vent to for the coming of the Messias; that, like them, we ought to call on Heaven and earth to give forth the Saviour;

saying in our hearts, "Come, O Lord, delay no longer"; and that we should consider our souls as sick when we have not for this "Bread of Life" the same hunger that we have for the food that sustains our bodies. See the saints, the hunger they felt for the reception of Holy Communion. It is said of St. Catherine of Siena that the longing she felt for the Blessed Sacrament was so great that her chaplain was often obliged to rise very early in the morning to administer it to her. And of Blessed Imelda, the patroness of first communicants, it is told how our dear Lord, to satisfy her, worked a striking miracle. For, she being considered too young to receive when all the other sisters were communicating, the Sacred Host flew from the hand of the priest and remained suspended over her head in the midst of a glory of light, which, perceiving, he administered to her, and her joy at its reception was so great that it carried away her soul, and she made her thanksgiving in Heaven.

Do we perceive in ourselves this spiritual hunger for the reception of Holy Communion? and do we approach the Sacrament with the other dispositions that I have indicated, that is to say, with a holy humility and purity of heart?

Ah, dear brethren, at the sight of the indifference which is shown by many amongst you, I avow that it is with difficulty I can believe you have a lively faith in the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist. For how, in spite of the unparalleled generosity of our Lord in giving us Himself in the Holy Sacrament; in spite of His tender invitations to us, saying, "Take ye all and eat of This; for, this is My Body," "Do this for a commemoration of Me," how do we find so many who

approach Holy Communion, seldom or not at all, or approach it with coldness and indifference? Deplorable folly! You don't refuse temporal goods that are offered you. On the contrary, you are impatient to receive them; yet you approach Holy Communion with coldness, if not irreverence.

O brethren, "if you but knew the gift of God"; if you had a living faith in the Real Presence of Jesus Christ, who wishes ardently to give Himself to you for your nourishment, no other remedy would be necessary to cure you of your indifference and fill you with a holy love.

Pray that you may obtain this living faith. It will be the fundamental disposition, on which will arise those other holy dispositions of purity of heart, sincere humility, and burning love.

THE UNWORTHY COMMUNICANT

"Therefore, whosoever shall eat this Bread, or drink the Chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord. But, let a man prove himself; and so let him eat of that Bread and drink of the Chalice. For, he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the Body of the Lord."—(1 Cor. XI, 27–29.)

I

1. It may be taken as a certain principle that God leaves no sin unpunished, and that either in this life or in the next the sinner will be obliged to undergo its penalty. As He says in Sacred Scripture: "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay."

Now, as there is no sin more injurious to God than that of a sacrilegious communion, we may take it for granted that there is none that He punishes more signally in this life and in the next. "Eating the Bread and drinking the Chalice of the Lord unworthily," according to the expression of the Apostle; like the deicide Jews the unworthy communicant is "guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord." They by their awful acceptance of guilt when they cried out: "His Blood be upon us and upon our children," brought on themselves the reprobation of God and man. "What punishment, think you, he deserves," says St. Paul, "who hath esteemed the Blood of the Just to be unclean by which he was sanctified?"

2. The punishments awarded to the sacrilegious communicant are of a threefold character, as we are taught by the Fathers of the Church, and as Holy Scripture itself suggests; namely, punishments of the temporal order; punishments of the spiritual order; and eternal punishment.

First, then, I say, that God punishes even in this life with temporal punishments, the sacrilegious communicant; and that, imitator of the Jews in their sin, he will be made to feel the anger of God in this life even as they.

In olden times, that inconstant nation had often drawn upon themselves the divine anger and punishment. But even then the Almighty in chastising them did not destroy them. He punished them, not to destroy them, but to preserve them in His ways, and recall them to Him. They returned and He received them. What completed their reprobation by God, and their destruction as a nation, was the crime they committed against the person of Jesus Christ.

Our Divine Lord had announced to them at Jerusalem the temporal punishments that were to overtake them for their crime; but how terrible is the fulfilment of that prophecy? Jerusalem surrounded by a hostile army; her ramparts strewn with dead; her temple, the glory of the world, reduced to a pile of charred ruins; her sanctuary sodden with the blood of her priests; her citizens felled by famine and the sword; all Judea, in a word, despoiled of her unfortunate inhabitants who are cut down by the sword, or dragged by the thousand at the chariot wheels of the conqueror, and are afterwards sent to serve as the bondsmen of the hated Roman; such is the dreadful vengeance that God wreaks on the

perfidious and sacrilegious nation. Nineteen centuries have rolled by and His vengeance still pursues them. In what state are the Jews to-day? You know it. The Holy Land has cast them forth. God has rejected them. His arm has scattered them among all nations. The Lord seems to have said: "Go, wandering sheep; bear throughout the universe the tidings of your deicide; and tell your descendants that the Blood of My Son, which your fathers demanded, is fallen upon them and you."

More guilty by a bad Communion than the Jews by the death of the Messias, shall we then be more spared? We deceive ourselves. The lightning that struck the deicide nation was formed on Calvary. It is upon the altar that the storm gathers that is to burst on the head of the sacrilegious sinner.

Pay attention to the words of St. Paul: "I am told," he said to the Corinthians, "that there are among you infirm and languid; that a sudden and unprovided death carries desolation into the bosom of your families." "Therefore, are there many infirm and weak among you, and many sleep." Aye, many sleep the sleep of death. Astonished at these misfortunes you ask the cause of them. Go into your churches; it is there that you will find it. "You eat and drink unworthily," says he, "not discerning the Body of the Lord; therefore, are there many weak and infirm among you, and many sleep." You eat the Bread of angels with as little discernment as you would eat common food. Behold the disorder! Be astounded at the chastisement. For, then, far from profaning the Body of the Lord, the greater part of the faithful would themselves shed their blood for His glory, and the Eucharist would produce fewer sacrilegious souls than martyrs.

To-day the disorder is more common; will the scourge be less rare? No, no; the proofs are evident. Afflicted mother, you ask again for that child taken away in the bloom of youth. Disconsolate wife, you weep over that cherished husband hurried to judgment by a violent death. Tender friend, you regret the friend whose memory is so dear to you. Is there a family that has not a subject for mourning and tears? "A thousand fall by your side," says the Psalmist, "and ten thousand at your right hand." O you of little faith, who attribute all to chance under the reign of Providence. Open your eyes. Open the eyes of your faith. "But thou shalt consider with thy eyes." Pierce the mist that hides from you the hand that strikes you. It is sin alone that arms that terrible hand. "Thou shalt witness the retribution of the wicked."

In the early ages of Christianity those glaring strokes of divine justice were ordinary. Thus we read that a woman, a hypocrite, after coming from the Holy Table, expired in the midst of the assembly of the faithful. We read of a rash boy who was consumed in the field by fire from the altar. An adulterous prince finds in the Blessed Sacrament poison, and in the Holy Communion his death. Numbers of men and women after a sacrilegious Communion, like Judas, became possessed by the devil. And those are not idle tales. They are facts. They are those that St. Cyprian had seen. They are those that St. John Chrysostom gives testimony of. They are those that eye-witnesses relate. Who has assured the sacrilegious communicant of our days that the scourge will not reach him?

3. But grievous as are the temporal punishments with which God visits the sacrilegious communicant, far

more dreadful are the spiritual calamities that ordinarily accompany the profanation of the Holy Mysteries.

We sometimes see a strange and unaccountable change come over the morals of our friends, and we know not how to explain the cause of it. Have we not known young men and women who from childhood up had shown the best dispositions; were upright, given to prayer, gentle in behaviour, modest, all of a sudden manifesting a new character; becoming unscrupulous, wayward, given to cursing, obscene language, and intemperance; become undutiful to parents, speak irreverently of God and holy things; who, in a word, seem to have undergone a complete interior transformation? How is this?

I know indeed that other causes may sometimes be assigned, and particularly a habit of secret impurity; but how often, alas, may it be traced to a sacrilegious Communion?

Before an unworthy Communion one commits sin only in fear and trembling. He stifles only with difficulty remorse of conscience. But when he has approached in cold blood to the Holy Table without the necessary dispositions, he has taken a plunge into the abyss of iniquity. After coming forth from the mysteries profaned one is ready for anything. He is no longer vicious by halves. All other crimes after that cost him nothing. There is, in a word, a kind of curse in a bad Communion which is scarcely ever effaced. The sinner shuts out all lights, smothers the voice of conscience, and there dwells afterwards in the midst of that heart an unhappy silence more hurtful to the soul than even sacrilege itself. Why is this? It is because God, having been outraged by a sacrilegious communicant, aban-

dons him to his crimes, and his crimes harden him. In multiplying his Communions he multiplies his outrages; and the last Sacraments of the Church become ordinarily for sinners of this character the last of their crimes.

4. That which caps the punishment of the unworthy communicant is the eternal chastisement of which it is the forerunner. Mark, I pray you, my brethren, the words of the Apostle: "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment," that is to say, damnation, "to himself."

Judas Iscariot, after having completed his sacrilege and delivered his Master to the Jews, was stricken with the horror of his crime. "I have sinned," he said, "betraying innocent blood." He cannot bear the remorse of his conscience. He courts death. He hangs himself in despair. Who had pronounced the sentence?

Not our Saviour; even when the deed was done, He invited Judas to repentance. Not the Jews: they referred it to Judas himself. "That is your affair," they said to him. "That is no business of ours. What has that to do with us? Let you look to it." It is himself that is accused, judged, and condemned. His accuser, his judge, his executioner is his own conscience.

Sinners, responsible for a like crime, you have reason to fear the same end. Heaven preserve me, dearly beloved, from causing you vain alarms; but God guard me from hiding from you the truth. If, like so many bad Christians, any of you have profaned the Blessed Sacrament, you should fear to die in despair. Listen to the terrible words of St. Paul: "He who communicates unworthily eats and drinks his own judgment," his own damnation.

Dreadful sentence! St. Paul had never before said anything so terrible. The world even had never heard the like. We know that the judge reads to the criminal his sentence; but that he makes him eat his condemnation; that a man should incorporate his own condemnation; that he should make of himself and of his condemnation one and the same thing; that is what has been reserved for the unworthy communicant.

But is there no hope, no pardon for the poor sacrilegious sinner? Alas, what can I say to you that can tranquilize you upon his sad lot? He can weep over his sin. The tears of a sincere penitent, we know, wipe out the most enormous crimes. All that can be wept over here below can be pardoned. To doubt it would be to doubt the infinite mercy of God. But to draw tears of compunction from the impious, is it not a miracle of miracles?

If you died profaning the Body and Blood of Christ, what could you do to screen yourselves from chastisement? Nothing. But now when time is yours, what can you do? What the Jews did when St. Peter reproved them for the death of Christ. They were touched at his words. "Great apostle," they cried, "what remedy? Is all lost? Is all lost?" "No, my brethren," replied the Apostle, "all is not lost. Do penance; do penance, and you shall wipe out your sin." The same words of consolation I address to you, dearly beloved. Have you made sacrilegious Communions? Do penance. You have exercised upon our Blessed Lord all your cruelty. He in return desires to exercise upon you all His mercy. You have shed His Blood in your fury. Apply to yourselves this same Blood by your repentance.

Prostrate then in contrition for your sins, beg pardon

of your outraged God. Ask of Him that the precious Blood which cries to heaven for the pardon of the repentant sinner may be shed upon your soul in remission of your sins.

And may that good God, "whose mercies are over all His works," grant you the forgiveness which you ask. May He mercifully forget all your iniquities and remember only your amendment and works of penance.

DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

I

1. One of the bitterest things felt by our blessed Lord in His Passion was a sense of desolation at seeing Himself deserted by His disciples and left in utter abandonment by the whole world. And this sense of desolation was made the more oppressive by the recollection of man's unfeeling selfishness and ingratitude. Of all those crowds who had followed Him in the days of His prosperity, of all those sick who were benefited by His generosity and miraculous power, of all those disciples who only a little while before had sat down with Him at the table of the Last Supper, not one was found to stand by Him in His agony and pour a word of sympathy into His jaded and tortured soul. Well, indeed, could He say, in the words of the prophet: "I have trodden the winepress alone. I looked around for one that would grieve together with Me, and there was none; and for one that would comfort Me in My sorrows, and I found none."

Somewhat of the desolateness that pressed upon the Saviour in His Passion may be said to haunt Him still in His sacramental life on our altars. Of course, on great solemnities we are all present, we all come to testify our faith in the Real Presence by coming to adore Him, to lay our wants before Him, and to partake of His bounty. Like those crowds whom long

ago He fed miraculously in the desert, we throng around His altar. Like them, too, we are willing for the moment to make Him the King of our hearts. But come to our churches, say on an ordinary week day, and behold the abandonment! Scarcely one throughout the livelong hours of the day or night to watch before the altar, to say a word to Him, to while away with Him the tedium of the time. Outside all is animation. On all sides are boisterous laughter and unceasing talk on worldly topics and events. Hundreds pass up and down heedlessly by the Church's open doors. Many, even of those who live only a few paces from God's house, never think of paying Him a visit, save on Sunday, to say a short half-hour's distracted prayer during the Mass commanded them by the Church. Only a few faithful ones care to sympathize with our Lord in His abandonment. Only a few care to condole with Him over the sins of men. Oh, truly can He complain, as He looks out from the tabernacle over the deserted Church: "I looked around for souls that would keep company with Me in My abandonment, and there was scarcely one, and for those that would grieve together with Me over the ingratitude of My people, and I found scarcely one."

Allow me, then, dearly beloved, to appeal to you to cultivate a tender devotion towards Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of the Eucharist—a devotion which will be shown not only by your faithful assistance at daily Mass when possible, and at Benediction, and by frequent Communion, but especially by the frequency of your visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and by thinking and praying often to Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of His love. This devotion is due to our Lord by reason

of His threefold relation with us in the Eucharist, as our Friend, as our Father, and as our God. And, first, as our Friend.

2. Throughout His whole life on earth Jesus Christ showed Himself the constant and tender friend of men. To see this you have only to consider Him in all His relations with them. Be they rich or poor, virtuous or malignant, the Lord extends to them the same generous love. Whether you consider Him amid the throng of followers who press around Him on the shores of the sea of Galilee, or at Capharnaum, where, we are told, the multitudes gathered from all parts of Judea to get cured of their infirmities; whether you contemplate Him at Sichem, or Jericho, or Siloe, or Bethsaida, or whether you picture Him by the open grave of Lazarus, at which the Saviour wept; or pardoning the Magdalen; or raising from the dead the widow's son of Naim; or feeding the starving multitudes in the desert; or, finally, amid the humiliations and sorrows of Calvary,— at all times Jesus shows Himself the tender and bounteous friend of men.

But nowhere were the deep depths of the Saviour's love for men more strikingly shown than in the institution of the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

Transport yourself in spirit to the Supper Chamber in Jerusalem, where Jesus on that first Holy Thursday evening instituted the Sacrament of His love. Hear the words of tender charity He speaks to the twelve seated familiarly around him, one of whom He permits to recline upon His sacred breast: "I will not now call you servants," He says, "for the servant knoweth not what His master doeth; but you were with Me from the beginning, and I have hidden nothing from you." "You

call me Lord and Master, and you say well, for, so I am; but, yet, I have been among you as one that ministereth to you." He compares His love for them with that of mortals, and He says: "Greater love than this no man hath, that he should lay down his life for his friends." And to prove His love by deeds, He rises from the supper table; He girds Himself with a towel; and with His divine hands He washes the disciples' feet.

Finally, as a departing friend is wont to bequeath to the friends he leaves behind him gifts as a last testimony of his love; so the Saviour takes bread (His countenance transfigured as on Thabor and all the love of the Godhead shining in Him), blesses it, and gives it to His disciples, saying: "Take ye and eat; This is My Body that shall be nailed for you to the cross. And, in like manner, taking wine, He blesses and distributes it, saying: "Drink ye all of this, for this is the chalice of the New Testament in My blood, that very blood that shall be shed for you, and for all mankind, unto the remission of sin." And as if he ardently desires to live in the remembrance of those He loves, He commands them, saying: "Do ye this likewise, daily, for a commemoration of Me. For, as often as you shall eat this bread, and drink this chalice, ye shall show the death of the Lord until He come."

This love, which Jesus Christ testified for the disciples at its institution, He still manifests to all in the Sacrament of the Altar. For our sakes He still lives with us in a state of humiliation. For our sakes He strips Himself of his majesty. He veils His glory under the appearances of bread and wine, that the sight of His greatness may not terrify us. He takes up His dwelling-place in our midst. He shares the poverty of His people

and loves to see us pour our sorrows into His breast.

Do you feel a sense of desolation in life as if your existence were to no purpose? Do you feel a sense of loneliness when, as the years pass along, you see the companions of your youth fall one by one at your side? Are you made to feel the inconstancy of human friendship when those who loved you formerly turn their affections elsewhere? Ah, then, seek the society of that constant Friend who is with you always to help you, and who says, "My delights are to be among the children of men."

Do the cares of life press upon you? Does your heart bleed under the burden of a secret, yet overwhelming, sorrow? Do you long for some sweet comforter to solace you in life? Jesus is all that and more, as He invites you, "Come to me all you that labor and are heavily burdened, and I will refresh you."

Does your soul languish with hunger and poverty, and do you long to taste of the sweets of the spiritual life? You can go to the tabernacle and "become inebriated with the plenty of God's house, and drink of the torrent of His pleasures."

Have your natural protectors deserted you? Are your parents no longer with you to watch over and provide for you? Then think of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. He is there, not only the tenderest of friends, but also the most loving and provident of fathers.

II

The appellation "Father" our Lord can lay claim to, not only on the title of Creation, for "He made us and not we ourselves," but also on that of Redemption.

When the human race had forfeited through sin the

privilege of sonship of God, and had become the slaves of the devil, the Divine Word yearned for them in their degradation with the love of an agonizing parent. And this love caused Him to leave the abode of His glory and come down to earth and take the form of a man in order that as man He might purchase us to life by the sacrifice of His life upon the Cross.

Become, thus, the Father of the human race, and the "Second Adam" by the new title of Redemption, He is filled with great tenderness towards us, and, as a consequence, watches over us with a loving and paternal providence. And how does this best of fathers provide for us in our spiritual needs?

In addition to the ordinary food of our souls, supernatural grace, and His holy Word, the loving inventions of our God have provided us with a new species of nourishment in His own sacred Flesh and Blood. And it is this unexampled generosity of Jesus Christ in giving Himself to us in the Holy Eucharist that is celebrated in Scripture, where He is compared to the pelican. "I am made," says the Psalmist, speaking in the person of the future Messias, "I am made as the pelican of the wilderness." Now, there was no bird more famed in story than the pelican; it was said of it that when it perceived its little ones bitten by a snake, it tried to revive them by feeding them with its own life-blood.

Ah, dearly beloved, we, all of us, the offspring of the good God, were bitten by the infernal serpent, and the poison of hell rankled in our veins. And Jesus Christ, the true "pelican of the wilderness," out of His generosity and goodness, feeds our famishing and poisoned souls with His own flesh and blood. How beautifully does our blessed Lord convey this to us in that lovely

discourse in which He promises the institution of the Sacrament of the Eucharist: "I am the living bread come down from heaven, . . . and if anyone eat of this bread he shall live forever. And the bread that I will give is My flesh for the life of the world. . . . He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath life everlasting, and I will raise him up on the last day. For, My flesh is meat, indeed, and My blood is drink, indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and as I live by the Father; so, he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by me."

III

Lastly, Christ in the Holy Eucharist is our God, and, as such, He demands the adoration of our minds and the fealty of our wills. When of old God dwelt in the camp of Israel, He made His presence felt by the most astounding wonders. He ruled over His people as the God of armies, under whom were marshaled the six hundred thousand fighting men of Israel, and claimed their fealty as a king. At His command the camp was moved, or the multitudes pitched their tents. Moses was but as the general-in-chief of Yahweh's army, who transmitted His commands to the Israelites, and arranged them in order of battle. The pillar of a cloud that hung over the tabernacle in the desert was as the banner of the Great King, and it became, at times, a fire that scorched and consumed His enemies. When, later on, Solomon built a temple in Jerusalem, the majesty of God filled the holy place, and His fire from heaven consumed the sacrifices therein. Three

times a year this God of Israel assembled the Jews from every quarter of the world to worship Him in His holy temple, and never did they dare to appear before Him without the tribute of gifts and sacrifices. The Jews, when they prayed, whether on their own native hillsides or under the skies of a foreign clime, were taught to turn themselves towards the holy temple in which they knew their God dwelt. In a word, God demanded, whether in the camp or in the field, in the workshop, or on the way—the God of Israel demanded fealty as a sovereign, and reverence as the Lord of all.

Somewhat similarly does our Lord dwell with us in the Sacrament of the Eucharist. He claims of us at all times worship as our God. And though love has veiled His majesty, and though He appears in this Sacrament under the humble species of bread and wine; still, as Christians, we must never forget that our God dwells in our midst as a King seated on His throne. The Church is His palace. The tabernacle is His audience chamber. The altar is His mercy seat. There, too, is He daily presented to the Father as the Mediator and Redeemer of His people. At times He has Himself enthroned in solemn state during the exposition, as if to give public audience to His subjects and to receive their acts of reverence, while clouds of incense are offered before Him, symbolic of His Godhead. Or, He makes a royal progress in all the pomp of lights and banners and with the acclamation of vocal and instrumental strains. Or, He confers on us His solemn benediction as a pledge of His royal beneficence and His bounteous help in our needs. Thus acts He as our God. Why, then, are we so sluggish in our worship, and why do we live so heedless of our God in the Sacrament of His love?

Oh, if Jesus Christ took away the veils that screen His Majesty, and we were permitted to see this Man-God who reigns over us in the Blessed Eucharist, how would we not humiliate ourselves before Him? Could we see Him, as did St. John in that famous vision vouchsafed him on the isle of Patmos, surrounded by myriads of blessed spirits who cast their crowns before Him, and sing unceasingly the hosannas of His praise! Could we see the light of glory that surrounds Him, and the Divine Majesty in all its splendor! But, does not our faith tell us it is so, and that Jesus Christ dwells amongst us as our God?

Let us then stir up our faith and devotion towards our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Let us come to Him to keep Him company as our dearest and most faithful Friend, trust in Him as in the tenderest and most provident of Fathers, worship Him as our God.

Thus will the Sacrament of the Eucharist be to us what it was intended to be by its Divine Founder, our solace amidst the trials of life; our earthly anticipation of the beatitude of Heaven; and the unceasing object of our worship, till we arrive at the abode of glory, where we shall be permitted to join the beatified in singing the eternal praises of the Lamb, to whom be honor, praise and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

"Now, when it was late that same day, the first of the week, and the doors were shut where the Apostles were gathered together for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst and said to them: 'Peace be to you. . . . As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you.' When He had said this He breathed on them; and He said to them: 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.'"—(John XX, 19–23.)

I

1. It was a joyful and a solemn event, the first appearance of the risen Saviour to the Apostles gathered together in the Supper Chamber in Jerusalem. For three days they had led a hunted life, concealing themselves in an upper chamber: or if they appeared abroad, it was only by stealth and in disguise; and now the Master appears to them, the doors being shut, and hails them with His accustomed salutation.

But it was not merely to console His disciples, or to prove to them the reality of His Resurrection that Jesus made His appearance thus among them. Ever mindful of our needs, the Saviour took the earliest opportunity after His Resurrection to enrich His Church with one of the most necessary and important of the Sacraments, and to complete the powers of the priesthood in the Apostles, by conferring on them the power of forgiving sin.

Now it is this Sacrament—Penance—that I purpose treating of this morning, and I begin by saying that in no act of the Saviour's life did He show a more tender and merciful providence over us than in the institution of this holy Sacrament. He saw what poor, frail creatures we were. He saw the many temptations we would be exposed to from without and within; from the world, the flesh, and the devil. He saw the numbers of Christians who would unhappily fall into sin, notwithstanding the graces poured out on them, and He hastened to provide for them a remedy.

Penance is, then, the great remedial Sacrament of the New Law—the Sacrament by which we are restored to God's friendship after we had miserably forfeited it by the commission of mortal sin.

This Sacrament is called by the Council of Trent "a second Baptism." And it is so, first, because it restores to us the gifts and privileges which Baptism had originally conferred on us, but which we subsequently lost through sin; and, secondly, because Christians who have fallen into sin have need of it like to that which all have of Baptism.

Now, Baptism is so necessary to every soul descended from Adam that he who, even without fault, has not received it, actually, or, at least, in implicit desire, can never, according to the announcement of our Lord Himself, enter into Heaven. Well, just so necessary is penance to all those who, after Baptism, have fallen into mortal sin. Unless they receive it actually or, at least, in implicit desire, they can never enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

2. The same Council adds that Penance is "a labori-

ous Baptism." It is a second Baptism, as I have said, because it restores to us the lost gifts of that Sacrament. But it is a laborious, a painful Baptism, because through it, in sorrow and travail, we are restored to the precious graces with which that Sacrament had formerly enriched us.

In receiving Baptism you gave yourself to God; you contracted an alliance with Him; you became His child by adoption; the heir of all His goods. You were made a member of the mystic Body of the Saviour; you were made the temple of the Holy Ghost; you were enriched with wonderful gifts and privileges. You were —and as many times as I say "you were" so many arrows of grief and lively repentance should pierce your inmost soul. For, in committing sin you lost all those noble qualities. Through affection for a vile creature you broke the promises you had made to God; you violated the alliance you had contracted with Him; you renounced the graces He had given you; you trampled under foot the Blood of the Testament, and saddened the Holy Ghost; you expelled Him from your heart in order to set up in it the idol of some gross pleasure. Is it not just that you should bear the penalty of your treachery and folly?

Pay attention to what I am going to quote from St. Paul on this subject. "In former times," he says, "when a man had transgressed against the law of Moses and when two or three witnesses had deposed against him; he was condemned to death without hope of reprieve. Think ye not that they deserve greater punishment who trample under foot the Son of God, profane His Precious Blood, and work injury of His Di-

vine Spirit?" And what punishment? Without doubt, eternal death and torture in that region where "everlasting horror and confusion dwell."

But our Lord, being mindful of our frailty, did not wish that the creature for whom He died should perish. He, therefore, instituted the Sacrament of Penance as a means by which we might be again restored to His friendship and the privileges we had before enjoyed. This He did on that memorable occasion I have quoted for you, when He appeared to the disciples and saluted them with words of peace. "Peace be to you," He said; "as the Father hath sent Me, so I send you." Now we know that the Father sent His Son to earth with power to forgive sin. And this power the Saviour exercised on many well-known occasions. "Arise, thy sins are forgiven thee," He said to Mary Magdalen weeping at His feet; and, behold, she that had been a sinner and the scandal of Judea, arose a saint, her heart filled with divine love, and higher in the estimation of God than he who had judged her in his heart a sinner! "That you may know that the Son of Man hath power to forgive sins" (He speaks to the Pharisees) "arise" (and He addresses the man sick of the palsy), "take up thy bed and go into thy house"; and immediately the sick man arose, being made whole of his infirmity. "Has any man condemned you?" said the Saviour to the woman taken in adultery. "No, Master," she said. "Neither will I condemn you," He said to her, standing shamefaced and contrite before Him. "Go, thou hast received My peace, and sin no more."

In sending forth His disciples to carry out His mission on earth the Saviour invests them with the same power to forgive sin. "He breathed on them," and with

the breath of the Man-God the Apostles inhale a new spirit and power. And even as at the creation the Almighty breathed into the face of the lifeless clay that was to form the body of Adam, and "man became a living soul"; so now, at the quickening breath of the Saviour, the Apostles are endowed with a life-giving and cleansing power to restore life to those spiritually dead, and to cleanse souls defiled by the guilt of mortal sin. "Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain they are retained."

II

The greatness and dignity of this Sacrament will be made more clear to us if we consider the effects that are produced in the soul of him who receives it worthily, and the infinite power and efficacy required to produce those effects. For theologians tell us that the work of justification as much exceeds the original act of creation, as the care and toil employed in the one exceeds that employed in the other. Now, at the creation God merely gave the word of command, and all things sprang into existence. "He said, and they were done: He commanded, and they were made." But in order to bring about our justification, things are altogether different. Man sins; and that he may be again restored to grace, the Son of God must come down from Heaven, assume our nature with all its infirmities, be born in a stable, lead a despised and mortified life, and finally die on the Cross.

And then the effects: what are they? The most astonishing that can be conceived. Through sin, as I have

said, the ban of excommunication from God's sight is upon us, and we are doomed to the chastisement of hell. Our souls are the lurking places of devils. Our whole nature is infiltered and impregnated with the nastiness of guilt; and every power, and faculty, and element in us is cursed and blasted by the hatred of Almighty God. Well, to that soul, so cursed, so hated by God, the Sacrament of Penance restores again the life of grace and the Holy Spirit with His sevenfold gifts. Through it the devils are hunted back to the gates of doom, and man stands forth in all the dignity of regenerated sanctity. Again God looks with complacency on His child, now made whole of his infirmities, and restored to all his lost privileges and favors.

2. Dear brethren, how great is the boon conferred upon us in holy Penance! How grateful ought we to be to the Saviour for the institution of this holy Sacrament? Rightly did the prophet speak of it as one of the greatest of the blessings to be inaugurated by the coming of Christ amongst us. "For," he says, "a fountain is opened in the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for the washing of the sinner." And the saints and spiritual writers of all times have eulogised it as one of God's supreme gifts to man.

Holy David, filled with gratitude to God for His many graces and favors, puts the question: "What shall I do to the Lord for all that He has done for me?" What return, dearly beloved, can we make to the Lord for the institution of this holy Sacrament? Well, there is one service that we can render Him, and one that He demands of us in the use of this Sacrament. "Holy things," He tells us, "are not to be given to the dogs; nor are pearls to be cast before swine." We are to treat the

Sacrament of Penance, then, with all the respect and reverence it deserves. And that we may not, like dogs, trample on the Blood of Jesus Christ, nor, like swine, sacrilegiously devour the precious pearls of grace contained in this Sacrament, we must prepare to receive it worthily; by prayer, by self-examination, by sincere and heartfelt sorrow for our past sins, by a candid confession of them to Christ's minister, and by a humble acceptance of the penance he imposes on us, ever trusting that that God who mercifully commences in us through this Sacrament the work of our sanctification, will perfect it by granting us the crowning grace of final perseverance.

THE PARTS OF PENANCE

I

In my former instruction on the Sacrament of Penance I treated of its institution, its effects, and its necessity. That necessity is absolute for all Christians who have fallen into mortal sin, and within whose power it is to receive this Sacrament.

Now, this being so, it is incumbent on us to know how to employ rightly so salutary a means of justification. And, first of all, let me lay down that the Sacrament of Penance is made up of four acts which are called in the language of theology, now, the essential, now, the integral parts of Penance. These acts are: Contrition, Confession, Satisfaction, Absolution. They are called integral parts, because united they make up the whole Sacrament; and essential, because if any of them be wanting, the Sacrament is thereby made null and void; in other words, no sacramental effect takes place in the soul.

Now to come to the nature of each of those parts separately.

1. *Contrition,* which is the first in the order of nature, as it generally is also in that of time, in a turning away from sin, together with a conversion of the heart to God by love. This turning away from sin and this conversion to God by sincere repentance were in all ages

necessary for the blotting out of sin. They were even necessary in a far more perfect form than is required in the Sacrament of Penance. Contrition was always necessary, I say, and the reason is at once obvious. For the perfection of God and the deformity of sin are so opposed to each other that it is impossible for affection for the one and the other to remain in the soul at the same time. This, then, is the beginning of our justification, the ground-work of the Sacrament of Penance; without which, even independently of the appointment of God, no justification can take place in the soul.

2. The second part of Penance is *Confession*. This is a sorrowful declaration of our sins to a priest appointed by the Church. And it was a merciful appointment of our Lord to ordain this practice in order to the remission of sins. For the making known of our faults to others is an outlet that nature seeks to the pent-up feelings of grief and remorse consequent on their commission. And hence relief is sought for and obtained in sorrow and remorse by the manifestation of the causes of that grief and remorse to others. It was fitting, then, that Confession should constitute one of the parts of Penance. But Confession is not necessary as a means of justification in the same sense as Contrition is. Our Lord, had he so willed, might have appointed other means than Confession for the obtaining of forgiveness for personal sins. He might, for instance, have raised Contrition, together with the general acknowledgment of sin, such as obtained among the Jews, to the dignity of a Sacrament; just as He did in the case of Matrimony, where He gave sanction to the natural contract of marriage and constituted it a Sacrament, with power to confer sacramental grace. But He did not will

to do so, and hence Confession takes its place as the second part of Penance.

3. The third part is *Absolution.* This is a most consoling appointment of our Lord, and one that shows us the tenderness of His government of us Christians as compared with His government of the Israelites of old. Formerly, when a man had fallen into sin, though he elicited the most heartfelt acts of sorrow for that sin; though he performed the most heroic penances in atonement for it; yet God had given him no sign by which to know that he had been forgiven. But in the New Law our Lord has chosen one like ourselves, a man with human sympathies and infirmities, and has vested him with authority to forgive sins in His name. This is clearly proved to us by the words of the Saviour to His disciples in the text that I have quoted for you in the beginning: "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven." When, therefore, after a sorrowful confession of your sins you hear the words of Absolution pronounced over you: "By the authority committed to me I absolve you from your sins," you are assured that your sins are forgiven you, just as if you had heard the Almighty Himself pronounce over you the sentence of pardon.

4. The last part of Penance is *Satisfaction.* When an injury has been done by one man to another, justice demands that amends be made to the injured party; and this, because the inequality brought about by the wrong done cannot be made good, save by a thorough restoration to the injured one of the rights he has been deprived of. And so with God. By mortal sin an infinite injury has been done Him—an injury so great that eternal fires cannot atone for it. By Absolution, I have

said, the guilt and eternal punishment due for such sin are mercifully remitted; but there still remains a temporal punishment to be undergone as a reparation of the honor due to God, which punishment is in proportion to the malice of our sin on the one hand, and the weakness of our repentance on the other; and this punishment is cancelled, at least in part, by the fulfilment of the penance imposed by the priest, who is appointed by God judge over the souls of his penitents. The humble acceptance of Penance, and the diligent performance of it, constitute Satisfaction.

II

1. These are then the parts that go to make up the Sacrament of Penance; and without them no sacramental effect can take place in the soul. But they may be looked on in another and still more important light, and one that gives us a clearer insight into the nature and working of Penance; namely, as the *matter* and *form* of the Sacrament. The introduction of these two terms, *matter* and *form,* necessitates a little illustration.

Well, then, every Sacrament is a sensible sign appointed by Jesus Christ to give grace. This sign is twofold—the matter and the form. The matter of a Sacrament is some sensible thing having power by the appointment of Christ to produce grace in the soul, and the form is a certain arrangement of words determining and giving effect to the matter. Thus, in Baptism the matter, that is, the sensible thing having power to produce grace, is water; and the form, the element that determines and gives effect to the matter, are the words of the minister of the Sacrament. In the Eucharist,

the matter are the bread and wine, and the form, the words of Consecration. So, also, in Penance, the matter are the acts of the penitent, or, rather, the sins to be forgiven as made sensible by the acts of the penitent, namely, by Contrition, by a sorrowful Confession of them, and by an humble acceptance of the penance imposed by the priest, or Satisfaction; and the form, the words of Absolution.

2. Now, why do I take such pains in making this distinction? I have an important object in view. I want to bring home conviction to you of the necessity of earnestness in the preparation for the reception of Penance. For, the matter and form of each Sacrament having been appointed by our Lord; if anything essential be wanting to either, the Sacrament is made null and void. Thus with regard to Baptism, if the element that is poured on the head of the person that is being baptized be not water, but some other liquid; no sacramental effect takes place. So, also, if the words pronounced by the priest in Baptism be not substantially correct.

Again, with regard to the Eucharist, if there be not bread and wine present, but some other elements; or if the words of Consecration pronounced by the priest be not substantially correct; no sacramental effect takes place; no sacrifice is offered. And so with regard to Penance which I am discussing. If there be anything substantially defective in the matter, that is, in the contrition of the penitent, in his confession, or in his will to accept the penance imposed; no sacramental effect takes place: the Sacrament is null and void. Moreover, herein lies the distinction between null and void confessions and sacrilegious ones. For, if willfully or

through culpable negligence anything essential be wanting to contrition or confession: the Sacrament is not only null and void, but also sacrilegious; whereas, if the defect occurs without deliberation or culpable negligence: it is null, but not sacrilegious.

I would have you, my friends, mark this distinction well: for, in it lies the whole importance of this instruction. If, when coming to Confession, the penitent have not true Contrition; or if he conceal a mortal sin from the confessor; or if he only half tell it; or if he do not make known the number of times he committed the sin as well as it is in his power to make it known; or if through culpable negligence in the preparation, he does not know his sins and consequently fails in confessing them; then, I say, the matter of the Sacrament is not presented by him; an essential thing is wanting, and the confession is not only null, but sacrilegious also.

3. Dear brethren, these are most important truths and ought to be known well by you. For it is the ignorance of those things or the contemning of them, more than anything else that fills the Church with sacrilegious Christians, crowds hell with reprobates, and brings universal ruin on the earth. Let it be, then, your earnest study to prepare to receive well the Sacrament of Penance. Let nothing essential be wanting to your Contrition. Let your Confession be a clear, upright manifestation of your conscience, as far as you can, after a careful examination of yourself, manifest it. Be animated with a sincere desire of satisfying God's justice outraged by your sins. Receive submissively the penance imposed on you by your confessor, and try to perform it with exactness and promptitude. Then may you ex-

pect with full confidence that the absolution pronounced over you will remit your past sins, restore you to the friendship of God, and grant you a sweet peace of soul, the most delightful heritage of God's chosen children.

CONTRITION

1. We have already taken a survey of the parts of Penance. We have taken note, moreover, of the rôle each of these parts plays in the make-up of the Sacrament. It now becomes our task to take up each of these parts separately, and explain in detail what may be useful to know concerning it. Let us devote this instruction to the first in the order of nature as well as of necessity, namely, Contrition.

This is defined to be "a heartfelt sorrow and detestation of sin, . . . with a firm resolution of amendment."

It is a sorrow; that is to say, a grief of heart, because of our having done a thing which we ought not to have done—of our having offended God. And truly, if we consider what sin is, and what God, to whom sin is opposed, is in Himself and in regard to us; we shall have little difficulty in conceiving this sorrow. What is God? He is the Sovereign Being—the Being infinite in all perfections. He is, moreover, our Creator, and our last end. From Him we have received all things—our being; all temporal goods, those of nature and fortune; spiritual goods, those pertaining to the mind and free will; and lastly, supernatural goods, those of grace, to which is attached our title to eternal glory.

Well, sin enters in and disturbs all those relations. It is an uprising of our will against God, and an assertion of our right to act as we please, to the ignoring of the

claims of His supreme will. For such a rupture of our relations with God, for such an act of rebellion against Him: it is right that we conceive sorrow and regret.

It is a heartfelt sorrow, that is, a sorrow that is not merely expressed in words, but one that is felt interiorly and that, produces a grinding and pulverising of our feelings; hence its name, "Contrition."

This heartfelt sorrow God and nature require; and hence, when the prophet preached repentance to the people, he called out to them: "Be converted to the Lord in fasting, and in weeping, and in mourning, and rend your hearts and not your garments."

2. Accompanying this sorrow for sin is a detestation of it as the instrument by which we offend Him. And here again if we reflect on sin we shall be led to hate it as the greatest of all evils. For so it is, inasmuch as it is an assault on God and an effort of the creature to destroy Him. And its effects on the soul, how dreadful are they! It deprives us of all spiritual gifts and privileges. From being children of God and His beloved ones, it makes us His enemies and objects of His anger. Our souls are made foul and dead in His sight, and we but await the moment of death to be cast forever into hell. Is it not just, then, that we conceive a hatred of it, and that we be prepared to suffer anything rather than again commit it?

3. And this brings me to the last element in Contrition: namely, the purpose of amendment.

Before I speak of it, I will ask you to observe that I am only bringing out the three points that are particularly insisted on in the Act of Contrition. "O my God," you say, "I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee; and I detest my sins most sincerely be-

cause they displease Thee; and I am firmly resolved, by Thy holy grace, never more to offend Thee."

Now these protestations, if they have any meaning on our lips, and if they are not a mere pretence, signify exactly what they express: namely, that we are touched to the heart with sorrow for our sins. "O my God, I am heartily sorry"; that we detest them; "My God, I detest my sins"; and that we are resolved, with God's help, never to commit them again. "My God, I am firmly resolved never more to offend Thee."

4. The last element of Contrition consists, I have said, in the purpose of amendment. It is in this that most people fail. It is, therefore, to this point that I wish particularly to direct your attention.

It is often a subject of wonder that many who go to confession regularly and appear sorry for their sins, in a short time fall back into their old ways. To use our Lord's words: "Their last state becomes worse than their first." What is the cause of this? The source of their relapse is to be found most frequently in their want of a true purpose of amendment.

Now, that our purpose of amendment be good and acceptable to God, it must be gifted with two conditions: it must be firm and practical.

It must be firm, I say; not a vague and wavering inclination towards good in general, as is too often the case with penitents; but a steady and clear determination of the will.

It must be practical. Now, there are many who, when going to Confession, are resolved to avoid sin in their after lives; yet they take no practical measure to ensure their perseverance, but allow themselves to drift along in life as occasion may carry them.

To those I put these important questions: How are you going to insure your perseverance in good hereafter? What steps do you intend to take in order to prevent a relapse into your former sins? Are you going to avoid that particular sin of drunkenness, or impurity, or injustice, or swearing; and if so, what measures are you going to take in order to avoid it? Will you shun the company of those who were the cause of leading you into sin in the past? Will you avoid that house, that place, that amusement? Will you cease reading the class of books that in the past brought about your fall? Examine yourself honestly before God in this matter, and if you cannot with all sincerity of soul say, "I will," then I say, your purpose of amendment is defective; an essential element is wanting to your contrition; your confession is a bad one. For remember that the law of God obliges us to avoid not only sin, but also the immediate occasions of sin. Hence, the man who goes wilfully into the immediate occasion of sin, who keeps dangerous company, for instance, who frequents places or takes part in amusements where he is in danger of falling; that man, I say, by so doing has already fallen into sin. I grant you that it may happen that on a certain occasion, or on a certain series of occasions, you may not commit an external act of sin; that you do not get drunk; or that you do not commit bad actions; or that you do not speak bad language. You are not on that account justified before God; for you went wilfully into the occasion, where you ran the risk of committing sin.

5. Take to heart, dear brethren, these lessons on the necessity of true contrition for obtaining pardon for

your sins in Penance. They are the most important practical truths that can engage your attention.

If, then, you find that you have for years past been relapsing habitually into a certain habit of sin; examine yourself carefully and see whether your contrition for that sin had all the elements required; whether you were animated with a sincere sorrow for it; whether you truly detested it as an act by which you offended God; and whether you had a true purpose of amendment.

THE GIFTS OF CONTRITION. I

1. When we have learned what Contrition is and what are its parts, we begin to have a knowledge of it, but there are yet many things to be known concerning it—and first, that it must be endowed with four gifts or conditions. These are: that it be supernatural, interior, supreme, and universal.

I explained in my last instruction what is meant by saying that Contrition must be interior: I said that it must come from the heart, and not from the lips merely.

Let me treat to-day of the second gift of Contrition—that it be supernatural. When I say that Contrition must be supernatural, I mean, in the first place, that it must be elicited by the help of grace; and secondly, that it must be founded on supernatural motives.

It must be elicited by the aid of grace. Every means must be proportioned to the end it is destined to bring about; and as justification is a supernatural state, it can be brought about only by the help of grace, or supernatural aid from God.

It must be founded on supernatural motives. Now, there may be some among you to whom this term may appear a little obscure.

2. Let me explain, then, that a motive is something that moves the will to act. When we do anything wilfully, we are always moved to do it by the apprehension

of some good to be attained, or of some evil to be avoided. That good to be attained, or that evil that we strive to shun, is called the motive; that is, the moving power of our action. I will try to make this clearer to you by one or two illustrations. A tradesman works assiduously all week. What is it that gives him this constancy in his work? It is the hope of remuneration to be obtained when the work is done. This expectation of reward is the motive of his work. Or, again, a man runs from a wild beast: what impels him to do so? The fear of danger. That fear is the motive of his action.

Motives are of two kinds—natural and supernatural. Natural motives are those which move us as men looking at things from a worldly point of view, and without any special relation to God. Supernatural ones, on the contrary, are those which are founded on faith, and which of their nature incite us to the performance of religious or supernatural actions.

Contrition, I have said, must be founded on supernatural motives. It will not suffice, for instance, to regret our sins because of some temporal disadvantage their commission brings upon us. The drunkard will not receive pardon from God, because of his regret that his drunkenness brought upon him loss of health, or position, or property. The impure man will not be forgiven, because he regrets the evils brought upon him by his sin. The unjust man will not be pardoned, because he weeps over the folly that has brought upon him the loss of his liberty or his credit. We must ascend if we would obtain pardon of our sins, and ground our Contrition on supernatural motives.

3. There are five of these commonly given in books of Christian doctrine: the fear of hell, or of other super-

natural punishments; the apprehension of the loss of Heaven; the apprehension of the deformity of sin, and of those sins in particular which we have committed; the thought of our ingratitude to God, who has done so much for us; and the thought of our having offended God, who is so good in Himself. These are supernatural motives, because they are founded on faith, and because of their nature they incite us to the striving for the possession of supernatural goods, or to the shunning of supernatural evils. It is only by faith that we can know of the existence of hell or Heaven. It is faith that makes known to us the deformity of sin and the evil that it works in our souls. It is by faith we learn all that God has done for us in creating and redeeming us, and in making His possession our last end. It is faith that teaches us the goodness and perfection of God: His sanctity, His truth, His justice, and all His other attributes, and it is this knowledge coming from our faith that moves us to sorrow for our sins. Well, our Contrition must arise out of the consideration of one or other of those great supernatural truths.

And surely the reflection on any one of them ought to be sufficient to awaken in our breasts a heartfelt sorrow for our sins. Who can think on the dread fires of that prison of despair to which his sins have doomed him without feeling the most lively pangs of grief for their commission? Who can stand in spirit at the foot of the Cross and see the Saviour smitten to death, that will not feel his heart ready to break with grief, for that his misdeeds had part in that great tragedy? Or, lastly, who can reflect on the infinite goodness and sanctity of God whose bounties are diffused throughout the uni-

verse: whose beauty ravishes the angels: on whose mercies we all depend: that will not feel his heart attracted by love to such goodness and beauty, and will not be filled with sorrow, for that he has by his sins put himself in opposition to Him and become His enemy?

4. Contrition springing from this last motive is the most perfect and generous of all; and hence it is called in the language of theology "Perfect Contrition"; whereas, sorrow springing from the other motives is called "Imperfect Contrition, or Attrition."

Contrition arising from the perfect motive of the love of God has this special virtue in it, that of itself, and independently of the Sacrament, it remits all mortal sin. For there can be no sin on the soul, no state of hatred of God in him who is enamored of God's goodness, and who loves God for His own sake. On the instant, therefore, that we conceive sorrow for our sins through the motive of the love of God, those sins are dissipated, just as the rising sun chases the darkness of the night; and our soul is flooded with the light of sanctifying grace, and is again made the dwelling-place of God.

But though Perfect Contrition of itself justifies us, we are not on that account exempted from the obligation of Confession. For Confession being instituted as a law by Christ for all those who have fallen into sin after Baptism, we are still obliged to submit to it, even though we may, by Perfect Contrition, have regained God's friendship.

And here let me deplore the unwisdom of those who neglect to employ this ever-ready means of justification. Many, when they fall into sin, instead of retrieving themselves by promptly eliciting acts of Perfect Contri-

tion, allow themselves to remain in that sad state for months, perhaps for years, to the evident danger of the loss of their souls.

Those, by their inaction, deprive themselves of many great goods, and expose themselves to great, perhaps irretrievable evils. Weakened by their sin they contract the danger of coming by other and more serious falls. They familiarize themselves with a life of sin; while, at the same time, they deprive themselves of God's special helps usually accorded to the just, and of the merits and virtues to be acquired in the meantime.

6. And now, to conclude, let me exhort you to strive to make your sorrow for sin supernatural by begging the help of God in prayer; by earnest reflection on those great supernatural truths; and by a lively conception of God's mercy: frequently repeating in the depths of your heart the words of the penitent Psalmist: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy; and according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies, blot out my iniquities. . . . For against Thee alone have I sinned, and I have done evil before Thee."

THE GIFTS OF CONTRITION. II

I

1. We have already considered two of the gifts of Contrition—that it be sorrowful, namely, and that it be supernatural. The third gift is that it be sovereign.

Now, when I say that our Contrition must be sovereign, I mean that it must exceed every other sorrow. The sorrow that we are to have for our sins must be greater than that which we feel for the loss of all things we hold dear in the world. It must be greater than that which we feel for the loss of our parents, our honor, our goods, our health. We must be even in the disposition of being ready to sacrifice life itself in the midst of torments, rather than again commit a single mortal sin.

You will ask, why? I answer: first, Contrition is destined to repair the outrage done to God by sin. Now, as mortal sin contains an infinite malice, inasmuch as it attacks a Being infinite in greatness, and who merits, therefore, infinite respect; it follows that Contrition ought to be something very precious and very considerable to be put in the balance of divine justice against it.

Second, Contrition holds the place of the torments of hell which the sinner had merited. Brethren, your faith tells you how terrible are those everlasting fires. How great then, how efficacious ought to be the tears of repentance that are to extinguish them!

Third, Contrition is the remedy which cures our souls of the wounds which sin has inflicted on them. How great, how powerful must this remedy be, to bring about so great an effect!

Fourth, Contrition ought to bring about in all sinners something of that which it brought about in the saints, for whom it procured the remission of their sins. Now what prodigies did Contrition not work in many illustrious penitents—in a St. Augustine, a St. Paul, a St. Mary Magdalen, and many others. It impelled them to the practice of the most rigorous penance. It confined numbers of them in the most frightful deserts. It buried others whilst yet alive in tombs and caverns. It filled monasteries. It separated numbers from friends and country—from all the pleasures, from all the advantages, from all the satisfactions of the world. It dried up their flesh. It made of them walking skeletons. See what it did in the case of holy David, who assures us that, from being accustomed "to mingle ashes with his bread, and tears with his drink, his flesh became dried up, and his skin cleaved to his bones." It was so great in some that it caused their instant death, as we learn from many examples that are recorded in the lives of the saints, and that are cited by authors worthy of all credit.

2. Bear in mind, however, that I do not speak here of a sensible sorrow, of a sorrow which makes us shed tears. For there are people who weep and sob, and who yet have no Contrition; while there are others who do not weep, and who, nevertheless, have a true regret for their sins. But I speak of a sorrow that works in the heart of man the detestation of his sins and makes him prefer the love of God before all things, even life itself.

II

1. The last gift of Contrition is that it be universal. Our Contrition must be universal: that is to say, it must extend to all mortal sins, placing the penitent in the disposition of being ready to suffer death rather than to commit a single one. This condition is not so common as people ordinarily think. There are many who in this imitate the conduct of King Saul in regard to the Amalecites. You remember the history of that famous king of the Israelites, and of his downfall. God commanded them to exterminate the whole wicked race of the Amalecites without sparing a single individual; but the unfortunate monarch, giving ear to his inclination rather than to the divine order, spared the life of King Agag, and thus committed a sin which resulted in his ruin.

It is in this way that many sinners act. God commands them to exterminate and detest all their sins without exception. But many reserve an Agag, I mean a particular vice, a favorite passion, which they cannot resolve to sacrifice. A miser, for instance, has a great horror of drunkenness, of impurity, of revenge; but he perseveres in his unlawful attachment to riches. He is unwilling to desist from unjust means of acquiring them, and does not restore his ill-gotten goods, as he is obliged. An impure man, on the contrary, looks upon avarice as a baneful vice. He gives freely. He is even prodigal rather than attached to riches; but as to his predominant passion, his darling vice, his proximate occasion: he cannot resolve to make an entire sacrifice of that. A drunkard has no difficulty in pardoning in-

juries. He has an extreme hatred of lying and theft; but he can never resolve to give up drunkenness. And so with others.

2. Examine yourselves seriously and see whether you have not a favorite vice, for which you have, ordinarily, no true sorrow; of which you scarcely ever correct yourselves, and which accompanies you, therefore, through life.

And, yet, if you do not detest that predominant vice as well as the others, if you do not labor to destroy it, you have no true contrition, and consequently no pardon, no salvation, to hope for; because a single mortal sin is enough to destroy us, and because if that single sin remains unrepented of, it remains unpardoned, and all the others remain to keep it company.

3. The Book of Kings relates that the prophet Samuel took King Agag, who was a big fat man, and hewed him to pieces before the Lord, and thus saved the people from sharing in the punishment of Saul.

Brethren, you must each of you slay your Agag. You must cut to pieces your well nourished vice, if you would be saved from the destruction that awaits you, and receive countenance from your outraged God. May you do so, and may the fruit of these reflections be that, when you approach the holy tribunal of Penance, you come with a Contrition gifted with those essential conditions.

O Lord God Almighty, since Contrition is a gift of Your mercy, we beseech You, refuse it not to us. Break our hearts with grief at the thought of having offended You.

Ah, how can we think, without dying of regret, that we have outraged our Creator; that we have insulted

our Sovereign Master; that we have crucified our Father and Saviour; that we have sheathed the sword in the bosom of God. Let us resolve, saying: "O my God, I will recount to You, in the bitterness of my heart, all the wanderings of my life. I will weep over them all my days. I will detest them even till death. I will condemn myself from this moment to perform a severe penance, that I may claim your just anger, and find favor at the throne of mercy."

CONFESSION

"If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all iniquity."—(1 John I, 9.)

I

1. If there came into town a man who promised to reveal the secret of curing the most dangerous and long-standing maladies, not only at little cost, but even without any expense at all, and who engaged himself moreover to enrich those to whom he had procured health; if he gave assured proofs of what he advanced, how would not people regard so extraordinary a physician? with what eagerness would they not come to him from every quarter? with what praises and blessings would they not load him?

I come to-day to teach you a remedy which infallibly cures the deepest wounds, the most envenomed ulcers, the most dangerous maladies of souls and that without any expense. It costs only a few tears, a few sighs. This is not all. It loads with spiritual goods and enriches for eternity those who receive it. This great remedy is sacramental Confession.

But in order that we may experience the effects of this admirable remedy we must employ it rightly—and this is what I want to teach you in the instruction I purpose giving you to-day, and in others that are to follow.

You all know what Confession is. There is no practice better known, or, I dare say, more consoling to the Christian. There is nothing better known in the Church than the practice of Confession; but I regret I must add, there is at the same time nothing worse known than the manner of making it well. Just as we find in the world people who pass all their lives in certain states, and yet who can never succeed, whether through indolence or dullness, in discharging properly the duties of those states—just as we find laboring men, for instance, who can never execute properly the directions of their masters; just as we find tradesmen who can never finish properly the work they have on hand; just as we find housekeepers who can never manage to keep dirt and disorder from their homes; so there is nothing more common than to meet with people who go frequently to Confession, and, yet, can never execute properly the commands of Jesus Christ in regard to Confession; who never put themselves to the trouble of preparing properly for it; who can never rid their souls of the dirt and disorder of mortal sin.

2. Now, Confession, to be good and efficacious, must have two conditions: it must be sorrowful, and it must be entire. It must be sorrowful; in other words, we must bring to Confession true sentiments of sorrow for our sins. This condition I explained when treating of contrition. Let me devote myself to-day to the explanation of the second.

Confession must be entire. When I say that Confession must be entire, I mean that it must embrace all mortal sins committed since Baptism and not already validly confessed, which we can call to memory after a careful examination of conscience.

I pray you, pay attention to this declaration: Our Confession, to be entire, must embrace all mortal sins committed after Baptism and not already validly confessed—it must embrace all such sins that we can call to memory after a careful examination of conscience. This is a condition that is required of us from the very nature of the Sacrament of Penance; for, when our Lord gave the Apostles power to forgive sins, He endowed them with judicial authority; that is to say, He constituted them judges of souls. Now, this being so, how are confessors to exercise their office of judges if the sins of their penitents be not made known to them in their entirety? They cannot pronounce sentence on those penitents without having first submitted to them the nature of their sins and the amount of their guilt; therefore, the penitent must act the part of accuser and witness against himself. Therefore, it is his bounden duty to make an entire and faithful declaration of his sins to the confessor.

Neither is there any other way open to sinners to obtain pardon of their sins. For, if there were, they would naturally shirk the painful and humiliating ordeal of Confession, and thus the Sacrament of Penance would become useless and illusory for the greater part of those for whom it was instituted.

3. Our Confession must be entire. Now, that our Confession be entire, it must be a faithful manifestation of our known mortal sins, such as after a careful examination we see them in our consciences. This is an important point and one on which a great many deceive themselves, alas, to the profanation of the Sacrament, and to their own spiritual ruin. How many go to Confession who fail to declare the sins of which they are

conscious? Through self-love and want of humility, they hide their sins, they palliate them, the things that are hard to tell they either conceal entirely, or they tell them in such a way as to mystify the confessor, and thus this salutary Sacrament becomes for them a curse rather than a blessing, since they receive it only to profane it.

Sins are to be told such as we see them in our consciences. Now, our consciences, being true witnesses of our guilt, give testimony in two ways, namely, as to the species of our sins and as to their number; that is, as to the kinds of sins we have fallen into, and as to the number of times we have fallen into each kind of sin.

First, as to the species. It cannot be unknown to you that sins differ in character. This difference arises from their opposition to different virtues, or to different commandments. Well, such as is their different character, which arises, as I have said, from their opposition to different virtues or precepts, they constitute different species of sin. Thus, a sin of injustice is different from a sin of anger; a sin of disobedience is different from a sin of infidelity; a sin of lying is different from a sin of intemperance, and so of others. Nay, there may be many species of sin committed against any one commandment or against any single virtue. Thus, for instance, with regard to the sixth commandment, there are sins of thought, of desire; sins committed by oneself; sins committed in complicity with others; together with subdivisions of those sins according to the quality of those others or of ourselves; subdivisions, moreover, of sins of desire corresponding to external actions.

See, my friends, how many different species of sin

may come under the one heading, and yet on each of these species must the confessor give judgment. Each of those species of sin, then, that we are guilty of, must be clearly declared to the priest, though in becoming language, to answer to the requirements of the divine law of Confession, as expounded in the decrees of the Council of Trent.

Again, the number of sins must be told in Confession —and this is a point I wish particularly to direct your attention to; for, alas, many come to Confession who examine themselves not at all as to the number of their sins. Those expose themselves to the danger of making their confessions invalid, since this is of strict requirement. Every mortal sin is an act of malice against God. It makes a great difference, therefore, whether that act has been committed once, twice, or ten times, in the acknowledgment that must be made of it to God's representative to whom we apply for pardon. It will not do, then, to give merely the species of sin; we must tell as exactly as we can the number of times we have been guilty of each particular species of sin.

II

1. Two classes of penitents fail in this matter of the integrity of Confession; first, careless Christians. There are those who come to Confession without serious thought as to the action they are going to perform— without due preparation, without prayer, without the dispositions which so serious, so awful an action demands, and who leave it to the priest to make up for their neglect by an arduous and unsatisfactory labor of instruction, exhortation, and questioning.

What is to be said of such penitents? Why, that their confessions are very often bad and invalid, if not sacrilegious; that their action is a profanation of the Sacrament; that they are often guilty of trampling on the Blood of Jesus Christ, and by so doing they drink deep of the cup of their damnation in that which ought to be for them the saving waters of eternal life.

Then, there is another class who fail in this matter of integrity,—a numerous class, I fear, and they are those who know the species and number of their sins, but who are afraid to confess them, or who depend on the priest to drag them out of the lurking holes of their consciences. They have committed sins—shameful sins —which they now fear to make known to their confessor, and which they allow to remain and luxuriate sometimes for months and years in their souls.

2. Well, poor deluded ones, if any such be listening to me, what can we do but pity and compassionate you? O dear brother or sister, I beg of you to reflect on what you do, and on the greatness of the sacrilege you commit by your unworthy confession. You abuse the gift of God; you trample on the Blood of Jesus Christ; you profane the Sacrament that was destined to justify you; you call down on yourself the swift vengeance of the Almighty. Reflect that it is to God you confess. The priest is only His representative. You ought, then, to accuse yourself with as much fidelity as if you saw our Lord Himself sitting in the tribunal of Penance to hear you. If you conceal your sins, if you disguise them, fear lest that be said to you which was said to Ananias as he fell dead at Saint Peter's feet: "It is not to man, but to God, to the God of truth, that you tell a lie."

And tell me what it is you are afraid of, and of

whom? Consider who the priest is to whose feet you come to confess your sins. He is a man. He knows human frailty. He experiences it in himself every day. He is faulty, weak, subject to temptations like yourself. Perhaps he committed before now sins as bad as those which you have to tell him; and if he did not, he would have committed them if God by His grace had not preserved him from committing them. He is a Christian, a child of the same Church as you. When you make known to him a sin that you would not for worlds make known to another, don't you show him the greatest mark of confidence? He should have the heart of a tiger, then, if he had not charity and commiseration for you, though he might seem to be stern with you. He is a priest of God, and, therefore, he rejoices at your conversion. The angels in heaven, we know, rejoice at the conversion of a sinner. Why should not your confessor rejoice when he sees you come to confess to him, and when he feels thereby that his ministry is made fruitful in the Church? Finally, he is your spiritual father. You yourself give him that tender and loving name; hence, you ought to have entire confidence in him.

3. Confess your sins, then, dearly beloved, with fidelity, and in their integrity. Say with the Royal Prophet: "I will confess against myself my iniquity before the Lord." He says "against myself" to show that he did not plead in his own cause to avoid the correction that he deserved. He continues, "before the Lord." Now, what one does "for the Lord" or "before the Lord," he must do faithfully, lest he merit the curse pronounced by the Wise Man against those who do the work of the Lord negligently. If you so confess your sins, you can say

after Confession what the prophet adds: "You, O Lord, have pardoned me the malice of my sins." God will grant you grace and mercy, and will put you in the way that leads to salvation.

BAD CONFESSIONS

I

1. It is an incontestable truth that the best medicines, if they be administered to a patient who is badly disposed for them, often prove the most dangerous, and throw the poor sufferer into a state almost beyond the reach of recovery.

The Sacrament of Penance is as we have seen the great remedy of sick souls. But if a penitent have the misfortune to receive it without due dispositions, instead of curing him of his spiritual maladies, it aggravates them; instead of rescuing him out of the abyss into which his sins have cast him, it plunges him into a still deeper one, and only too often leaves him in a state entirely desperate.

It is in order to incite you to use all your efforts that you may approach the holy tribunal of Penance with the dispositions that God demands of you, and at the same time to leave nothing undone to repair past failings on this head, that I come to address you again to-day on the Sacrament of Penance, and in particular I wish to show you the folly of those who conceal or who disguise their sins in confession.

The blindness of those who conceal or who disguise their sins in confession is indeed prodigious, and in some way unaccountable. What, in fact, more un-

accountable than to see reasonable people deprive themselves of many inestimable goods, and procure for themselves frightful evils through pure omission, and without knowing the reason why? They deprive themselves of all the advantages of the Sacrament of Penance, which are very considerable; they deprive themselves of sanctifying grace, of the friendship of God, of the gifts and of the presence of the Holy Ghost, of the restitution of all their past good works whose merits had been suspended by their sins; and, at the same time, they cast themselves into a frightful state of danger and despair. They profane the Blood of Jesus Christ by receiving a sacrilegious absolution. From this they proceed to trample under foot His Adorable Body by communicating unworthily. They condemn themselves to cruel remorse during life, and to frightful despair on the bed of death; and, finally, to suffer for eternity the punishment of hell. And all this for what? To avoid a slight confusion, the outcome of self-love, and through yielding to a vain and frivolous fear.

2. Now, as fear, coming from one source or another, is the cause of the greater part of the sacrilegious confessions that people make, let me try to show you how foolish it is, and how great the folly of those who allow it to restrain them from a full and candid declaration of their sins. This fear, indefinite as a rule, and induced in the soul by the father of lies, may be expressed under the four following heads: the fear of the loss of esteem of the confessor as a result of confessing to him certain humiliating sins; the fear of reproof; the fear of a hard and humiliating penance; and the fear of refusal or delay of absolution.

And do you imagine, in the first place, dear brother or sister, that you will lose the esteem of your confessor by a humble and candid confession of your sins? You deceive yourself. Up to this he could have ground for suspecting that you were only a hypocrite, because he knows right well that it is only too common to find people who conceal their sins in confession. But when he will see that you declare with sincerity your sins, shameful and humiliating as they may be, he will judge that you are in good disposition, and will esteem you the more for it.

I remember once having been in conversation with a venerable bishop, one who exercised a greater influence over souls, perhaps, than any other ecclesiastic of his time and country, and in speaking on this subject he said: "I assure you, no matter how great may have been the sins a penitent confesses to me, I can see nothing in the bowed and contrite figure at my feet but the lovely soul just cleansed by the Blood of Jesus Christ, and by the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity; and I myself bow down and worship God who has set up His throne in that soul justified by the absolution I gave him." And this simply expresses the sentiment of every enlightened priest towards the penitent whom he has absolved. For, how can he condemn him whom Jesus Christ esteems, or how look on him as unclean who has been cleansed by the same Saviour through the merit of whose death he himself was redeemed?

Lay aside, therefore, dearly beloved, all fears coming from this head, and believe what is most true, that your confessor has for you an esteem which no one else can have, since no one else can know as he does the infinite worth of the soul just now enriched

with the precious treasures of grace received in the Sacrament of Penance.

3. Are you afraid that he will reprove you for your sins, or that he will load you with penances, or that he will refuse you absolution? But be well persuaded to the contrary. He will take good care not to complain. Instead of making use of harsh and severe words he will treat you with all sweetness possible. He will compassionate your weakness. He will help you to declare your sins. He will avail himself of all his experience and knowledge and all his industry to draw out of your conscience that winding serpent that bites you and poisons your whole being, if you on your part make the necessary advance, and give him the opportunity to aid you in your happy delivery. And when you shall have confessed your sins, what joy will you not have and peace of soul in compensation for the little shame in confessing them? You will bless the Lord a thousand times for having given you courage and strength to declare them, and you will be surprised at your former weakness, seeing that your ground for fear was so imaginary.

As to the rigor of the penances you imagine you are going to receive, disabuse yourself of that fear. Your confessor will treat you with prudence, and will appoint for you only satisfactions proportionate to your power and the wants of your soul.

Lastly, as regards the refusal of absolution, he will act solely for the good of your soul. What! would you have him make you commit a sacrilege by giving you absolution with your soul unprepared? If, then, he judges it proper to defer absolution for a time, this will be solely in order that you may prepare with

greater care, and that you may find in the Sacrament of Reconciliation the life and not the death of your soul. You see then, my dear brethren, how great is the folly of those who conceal their sins in confession.

II

1. But may we not say here to those who conceal their sins in confession what the servants of Naaman said to their master when he came to the prophet Elisaeus to get cured of his leprosy? He was a Syrian nobleman, and when he came to be cured by the prophet, the man of God bade him go and bathe seven times in the Jordan and he would be cured. He indignantly refused to do so, saying: "Are not the Abana and the Pharphar rivers of Damascus better than all the waters of Israel, that I may wash in them and be made clean?" But his servants came to him and said to him: "Father, if the prophet had bid thee to do some great thing, surely thou shouldst have done it; how much rather what he now hath said to thee, 'Wash and thou shalt be clean?' "

If God commanded you, my dear brother or sister, to go and publish through the country the most secret and shameful sins of your conscience under penalty of the loss of Heaven and of being damned forever, ought you to hesitate a moment to do it? On the contrary, he contents Himself with demanding from you that you declare your sins in secret, to a single man, to a man who is obliged by every law, human and divine, to keep them an inviolable secret. He gives you permission when you are afraid of one confessor to go to an-

other; to go and seek him as far away as you please; to choose one who does not know you.

And here let me give a few words of advice to parents and others who follow inquisitively the conduct of their children and neighbors in regard to their confession. Don't be too hasty in forming judgments as to their conduct, first, in not going to the altar on the morning after confession; second, in going to strange priests; and, third, in going frequently.

Many do not wish to receive Communion till after they have gone a second time to confession. Many find greater confidence in the direction of one confessor than in that of another. There are people of very delicate consciences and who have at the same time great respect for the Sacrament. It is tyranny to interfere with souls in delicate matters of conscience of this sort. And if our blessed Lord has given the greatest liberty to souls in regard to their confessions and to those to whom they shall confess, how will unauthorized and uninformed outsiders dare to interfere with that liberty?

2. Confess your sins, then, sincerely and candidly, and be not held back from doing so by any vain fear. Know for certain, in the first place, that there is no other means of obtaining the pardon you seek, and without it your eternal ruin is assured. Yes, were you to give all your goods to feed the poor; were you to practise the greatest austerities throughout life; were you to convert as many souls as the Apostles; were you to suffer the most frightful torments for the faith, without a faithful and candid confession of your sins when in your power, there is no pardon to be hoped for,

and you are as certain of going to hell as if you were already there, because God wishes to be obeyed, and He counts as nothing all the rest that you can do. What is more terrible still in this cursed silence is that all the absolutions you receive in this state, all the Communions you receive, are so many sacrileges.

Know, moreover, that unless you do so, you will be torn night and day with an uneasiness and remorse which will make life for you an anticipated hell. Nor is this all: at death a frightful despair will overwhelm you, and you will die in uncontrollable rage and terror, according to that saying of the Wise Man: "He that conceals his sins shall come by a bad end." Nay, if you conceal your sins now from God's authorized representative, He will reveal them on the great day of His judgment in the sight of heaven and earth; He will make them known to your relatives, and friends, and neighbors; to all men and angels.

But even this is not all. These concealed sins will go down with you to hell, where they will devour you forever. They will be so many monsters dangling their hideous forms before your eyes and making more frightful still your eternity of pain and woe.

Go, then, I say, in God's name, you who feel your consciences burdened with a load of concealed sins. Throw yourselves at the feet of a wise and discreet confessor. Open to him entirely your heart with all its weaknesses and evil inclinations. Taste and see how sweet the Lord is amid the humiliations of a sincere confession. You will find in it an inconceivable peace and joy, and God will make you feel in the depths of your heart the truth of the words of Scripture. "He who shall declare his sins humbly shall find mercy."

God will, as He says, "cast them into the depths of the sea." He will hide them in an eternal oblivion, never again to trouble the peace of your soul, or to interfere with your happiness in this world or the next.

SATISFACTION. I

1. After having explained to you the first two parts of penance in a manner that, I trust, will enable you to appreciate their importance more fully than perhaps you did before, and to bring a more enlightened knowledge to the reception of this great Sacrament, it now remains for me to instruct you on the third part, viz. — Satisfaction. I join this part to Contrition and Confession, inasmuch as it together with them, constitutes what is called the matter of Penance; and these three acts or parts of the Sacrament, it belongs entirely to the penitent to contribute; whereas, the form of the Sacrament, or absolution, is a thing that is obliging on the confessor alone to have a thorough knowledge of.

Satisfaction is a part of penance to which I fear all the attention that it deserves is not given ordinarily by penitents; alas, to the profanation of the Sacrament, and their own spiritual loss.

Satisfaction is, as you are taught in the Catechism, a reparation of the injury offered to God by sin and of the injustice done to the neighbor.

2. Now, we can look on Satisfaction either as an essential part of the Sacrament of Penance, or solely as an integral part of it. Considered as an essential part of Penance, it is the desire and the sincere will which every penitent ought to have of satisfying God and the neighbor, and in this sense it is so necessary to the Sac-

rament that, if it be wanting, the Absolution is absolutely null and void. For it is presumed when Absolution is pronounced over the penitent that he is sincerely sorry for his sins, and it is only on this condition that it has effect.

Now, true sorrow for an offense carries necessarily with it a sincere desire to make amends to the injured party. Unless, therefore, the penitent have the sincere intention of making satisfaction to the one and the other, there is no true Contrition, and, consequently, no pardon as the result of Absolution.

Examine yourselves carefully on this point, my dear brethren, and do not flatter yourselves. There is question here not only of being resolved to perform the penance which the confessor enjoins, for, ordinarily, penitents are resolved on that point; there is question, moreover, of being firmly resolved to repair, as far as is in your power, the consequences of sin, of rendering to God the honor you have deprived Him of by your offenses, and of repairing entirely the injury you have done your neighbor. This latter takes in, for example, restoring to the neighbor his goods of which he has been unjustly deprived, repairing his reputation, being reconciled with him, remedying the bad example you may have given him; in a word, putting things in the state in which they were before your sin.

What a subject of fear for us all, my dear brethren? Who can flatter himself with having been always in those holy dispositions of which I speak? What ought those to judge who defer unnecessarily the payment of their just debts; who delay always to restore ill-gotten goods; to repair their scandals; to restore to the neighbor the honor and reputation they have robbed him of?

What ought those, I say, to judge of their confessions? What ought those to think who delay to perform the almsgiving, and prayers, and fasts that have been enjoined on them in the sacred tribunal of Penance; who make no scruple to omit them, either wholly or in part; who never seek an occasion of being reconciled with their neighbors; who, on the contrary, seem to avoid them and to fly from them with care? Why, that they had no sincere intention of satisfying God or their neighbor at all, and that, therefore, they ought to look on those confessions as null, and repair them as soon as they can, after having performed those duties by a general Confession.

3. Satisfaction, considered as an integral part of Penance, consists in the fulfilment of this desire and resolution, and this actual satisfaction obliges under pain of mortal sin when the matter is considerable. I do not say that the failure of a penitent to fulfill what he has promised sincerely in confession is a thing that causes the pardoned sins to revive in his soul. No, the gifts of God, of which the pardon of sins holds the first rank, are without recall, according to the teaching of the Apostle; that is to say, sins once pardoned appear no longer; they are buried in an eternal oblivion. But I say that he who fails to accomplish what he promised, and who is afterwards wanting in the will to make satisfaction for his offenses, renders himself guilty of a new mortal sin, of a crime which contains both a monstrous ingratitude towards God, and often a crying injustice towards the neighbor. This is not all. This omission of a duty so essential dries up in some sort the source of grace, and thus exposes the

sinner to fall again into the sins that he had confessed, and even into others still more grievous.

4. Actual satisfaction consists, then, in the first place, in vindicating God for the injury we have done His infinite majesty by our sins, and this sort of reparation can be done by all sorts of good works, and particularly by prayer, fasting, self-denial, penance, and almsgiving, which includes contributing generously to all kinds of charitable or religious ends.

This obligation of satisfying the justice of God comes from the punishment we deserve on account of sin; and on this point I must remark that by sin we incur not only the *culpa,* or guilt, which is that stain, that deformation which renders the sinful soul so hideous in the sight of God; we incur, moreover, the *poena,* or debt, which is an eternal debt when we speak of mortal sin.

Now, in the Sacrament of Penance this eternal debt or punishment is changed into a temporal one, which we must of necessity undergo either in this life by satisfactory works, or in the other by the terrible fire of Purgatory.

Such, dearly beloved, is the disposition of divine providence; such are the decrees of the Almighty, decrees unchangeable, so that sin must be punished as much as it deserves. It was in order to cancel the eternal punishment of mortal sin that Christ died; and had it not been for the merits of His death, the whole human race would have been condemned to eternal privation of the beatific vision on account of original sin, and the greater number to the eternal punishment of hell on account of mortal sin.

But although Christ made reparation to His Father for all the sins that have been committed since the beginning of the world, and that will be committed to the end of time, we are not, therefore, dispensed from undergoing a temporal punishment according to the degree and measure determined by divine justice, in view of the number and the grievousness of our sins. For, although sin be remitted to us in the Sacrament of Penance, as far as regards the guilt and the eternal punishment in virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, there remains a temporal punishment to be undergone, and this is the satisfaction we must make to God.

See, then, dearly beloved, that you make this satisfaction to God by your penitential actions now. Practise works of penance here, where good works are not only satisfactory but meritorious, and where the mercy of God tempers His justice, and put not off this great work to the hereafter, where sufferings are satisfactory alone, and where God's justice, rigorous and unflinching, shall be dealt. Thus you will cancel the great debt you owe to God, and you will at the same time earn for yourselves an everlasting crown of glory.

SATISFACTION. II

1. In our last discourse we studied what satisfaction is, considered either as an essential part of the Sacrament of Penance, or as an integral part. We considered it as it looks to the reparation due to God for sin, and as it looks to a restoration to the neighbor of the rights we have deprived him of by our sins.

It now remains for us to consider the gravity of the temporal punishment exacted by God for sins forgiven in Confession, and the urgency of repairing the injury done the neighbor. And, first, the gravity of the punishments due for sin.

What is the measure of the temporal punishment that remains for each mortal sin? This is a thing we do not know. Nevertheless, we can form a conjecture, and even judge that it is very great, since we have examples that are a proof to us that it is so. David obtained the pardon of his adultery and murder. He could not doubt it, since the prophet Nathan assured him of it on the part of God. This penitent king made extraordinary satisfaction to the Supreme Majesty whom he had offended. He clothed himself with a rough sackcloth; he lay on a hard bed; he mixed ashes with his bread and tears with his drink; he bedewed his bed with tears every night. And yet the justice of God was not satisfied. He permitted that many grievous trials should befall this illustrious penitent. The fruit of his adultery died. He saw his whole household in frightful

disorder. One of his daughters was dishonored by her own brother. One of his sons murdered another and endeavored afterwards to take from himself his kingdom, together with his life. His old age was blighted with sorrow.

Holy Church, guided by the spirit of God, makes well known to us what are her sentiments on this subject. She judges that the temporal punishments due to forgiven mortal sin must be very great indeed, when in her penitential canons she prescribes for a single mortal sin satisfactions long and painful, satisfactions, the very reading of which causes us fear and astonishment.

Allow me to put before you a few examples of the satisfactions she prescribes in those canons which were the theological rules for the guidance of confessors in the early ages of the Church, and you can judge for yourselves how light are the penances that are imposed in our times in the sacred tribunal, and how far removed from the former salutary rigor.

For having consented to a bad thought, it was ordained by the canons to fast three days on bread and water. For having been drunk once, there were fifteen days of fast in the same manner: that is to say, on bread and water. For each day of the fast of Lent that had been broken, there were appointed seven fast days with the same rigor. For having spoken in church during the public ceremonies, it was commanded that the offender fast ten days, also on bread and water. For public crimes and crimes accompanied with scandal, and for certain enormous excesses, there were penances of three years, of seven years, of ten years, and even penances that lasted the whole life.

Moreover, during all this time the penitents were obliged to remain at the church doors during the Divine Office and the Mass. They were clothed in sackcloth, and covered with ashes, and they wore neither arms, as was usual at the time, nor linen, nor were they permitted to appear with the marks of their dignity. They ate neither flesh nor fish, except on solemn festivals. All amusements were forbidden them. They fasted almost constantly, and often on bread and water. This usage lasted many hundred years, and would to God that the laxity of Christians had not put an end to it; we would not to-day witness so many disorders in the world.

2. What, then, my brethren, was the Church of God deceived, she who is guided by, nay, who in her teaching is the very organ and mouthpiece of the Holy Ghost? Was she too severe? Is not sin to-day as great an offense against the Divine Majesty as it was in those times? Ah, what a subject for fear for us who do so little penance! The saints had very different sentiments, and they always entered into the views of the Church. What have not true penitents in all times done? What austerities, what penances did not a Peter, a Paul, a Magdalen and so many others perform? What do not so many truly converted sinners do to-day who are confined in monasteries where they practise great austerities, where fasting, labor, silence, and prayer, take up all their time, without there remaining the least part for lawful recreations? How many others in the world who perform severe penances? What will become of us, my dear brethren? What will be our lot if we have not the happiness of dying with our sins pardoned both as regards their guilt and as regards the

temporal punishment due to them? How long shall we be in the torturing fires of Purgatory, and what terrible torments shall we suffer there?

3. Actual satisfaction consists, in the second place, in making reparation to the neighbor for any injury we may have done him. It has regard, as I have already observed, to the restitution of his property or character, if one has unjustly taken it away or damaged it; to a reconciliation with him, and to the reparation of scandals we may have given him. But it concerns the doing all this entirely and promptly when within our power, and this under pain of mortal sin when the matter is considerable.

Let us, dearly beloved, by salutary satisfactions repair the injury we have done to God and to our neighbor by our past sins, that thus we may anticipate the terrible judgments of God, who is the avenger of the rights of both, and escape the punishments meted out for sin in the scorching fires of Purgatory.

THE CONDITIONS OF SATISFACTION. I

1. In our last instruction we considered satisfaction, 1st, as an essential, and 2nd, as an integral part of the Sacrament of Penance. To-day we shall occupy ourselves briefly with the consideration of the conditions of satisfaction. And I say that satisfaction, as well that which is imposed by the confessor as that which a person performs otherwise to supply for it, should have five conditions. It ought to be performed in the state of grace. It ought to be satisfactory, medicinal, proportionate, and exact.

First, penance or satisfaction ought to be performed in the state of grace. I do not wish to convey that the penance which has been imposed in confession is not sufficiently fulfilled should a person have performed it in the state of mortal sin. But I say that the penance thus performed does not produce any merit for eternal life. Every work done in the state of mortal sin is a dead work, a work lost for Heaven. Moreover, if a confessor has given for penance any one of those good works which are null if they be not performed in the state of grace, as, for instance, Communion, the Paschal duty, etc., the penitent does not satisfy if he does not perform them in this state; and besides, he incurs the additional guilt of sacrilege.

Let us deplore the blindness of so many Christians who perform mortifications and penances, who fast,

pray, assist at Mass, give alms, and perform other good works in the miserable state of mortal sin, and who thereby lose their pains and labor for eternity. How many are there who pass almost all their life in this deplorable state, and who could well say at the hour of death, "we have labored throughout our whole life, and we have gained nothing, because we have labored in the night of mortal sin."

2. In the second place, Penance should be satisfactory.

By this I mean that it ought to vindicate against the sinner the Supreme Majesty outraged by sin, and to restore to the neighbor the goods of which he has been unjustly deprived. Each species of sin does a particular injury to God and the neighbor. By penance, then, we must labor to repair those injuries. A proud man has taken from the Sovereign Lord the honor that is His due, to attribute it to himself. He has at the same time despised his neighbor in setting himself above him. He should, by penance, try to restore to God his honor by humbling himself profoundly, and he should, besides, abase himself before his brethren as much as he had exalted himself above them. A miser has done an injury to God and the neighbor—to God, by abandoning Him to attach himself to perishable riches—to the neighbor, by taking from him his goods, or refusing him the help he owed him. An impure person has perpetrated a cruel outrage on the Holy Ghost by profaning his body, which is His temple. He has also offended his neighbor by giving him a bad example, perhaps even by making him the accomplice of his shameful actions. He must labor with all his power to repair those evils by morti-

fication, fasts, austerities, good example, and holy living.

A scandal-giver has waged an open war against God by debauching His subjects and by snatching from Him souls purchased by the Blood of the Saviour. He has also done his neighbor the greatest evil that was in his power by opening for him the abyss of hell. He must spare nothing to prevent the consequences of his evil example, to remedy his scandals, to save as many souls as he has ruined.

In a word, all sinners ought to repair as far as is in their power the injury they have done to God and the evil they have caused their neighbor. This they can do, as regards God, by a holy and penitential life, by a profound humility, by an exact observance of His law, by an entire renunciation of the world, its false honors, its base pleasures, its perishable riches, its manners, its maxims and profane amusements, by an interior crucifixion, and by continual resistance to their passions and bad inclinations; and as regards the neighbor, by the restitution of the goods they have taken from him, by the reparation of his reputation or honor, by reconciliation, by good example, and by assiduity in fulfilling all the duties by which they are bound towards him. This is what is called true satisfaction.

3. The third condition of penance, or Satisfaction, is that it be medicinal. This means that it is not enough that satisfaction repair the evils and disorders our past sins have caused; it should, moreover, strengthen the penitent against a fatal relapse. To what purpose is it that a sick person should have been cured of a dangerous malady if he is to relapse into it again a few

days afterwards? The physician who would have attended him would have indeed lost his time and trouble, and the sick person would have so much the greater reason to complain, as his relapse would be so much the more dangerous than the original attack. In the same way, what would be the good of a penitent's having obtained the pardon of his offenses, and of his having been reconciled with God, if he fall again into his sins? "His last state would be," according to the saying of Holy Scripture, incomparably "worse than the first."

It is, then, essential for those who have entered into the state of grace by the Sacrament of reconciliation to do penances which will preserve them from relapse. Confessors are directed to impose such penances on them, and the penitents themselves should perform others which will have the same effect. As spiritual evils, like corporal ones, are cured by contrary remedies; so we are preserved from the ones as well as the others in the same way. A converted sinner ought then, in order to strengthen himself against relapse, to do penances which attack his predominant passion and which contradict his bad inclinations. He who has been subject to drunkenness, for instance, ought to shun the saloon and the companions of his debauched life, and mortify his appetite. He who has been the slave of avarice ought to become generous in alms deeds, and liberal in his dealings with others. He who has emerged out of the mire of luxury ought to fast and mortify his guilty flesh by divers austerities; above all, he ought to pray and labor much and fly with care from the occasions of sin. He who has given way to pride and envy ought to humble himself unceasingly, and practise charity towards the neighbor. Each peni-

tent ought to examine and see what are the good works, the penances and mortifications he has found and judges to be the most efficacious to strengthen him against sin. These are some of the conditions which satisfaction, as well that which is imposed by the confessor, as that which one performs otherwise to supply for it, ought to have. See that yours be gifted with these conditions, so that repairing the injury done by your sins to God and the neighbor, you may enter the happy state of unindebtedness before God and the Church, and earn for yourselves the reward which good deeds merit with a just God, who will render to every one according to his works.

THE CONDITIONS OF SATISFACTION. II

1. In my last instruction I pointed out three of the conditions with which our satisfactions or penances done for sin ought to be gifted. They ought to be performed in the state of grace. They ought to be satisfactory and medicinal.

To-day I come to point out two other conditions. And in the first place, those satisfactions and penances ought to be proportionate. They ought to correspond to the number and the grievousness of the sins one has committed. Thus, those who have been guilty of great sins, or who have committed a large number of them, ought to perform penances and satisfactions incomparably more considerable than those who are not nearly so guilty.

Ah, my brethren, what a subject of fear and astonishment for us who have committed so many sins during the course of our lives! There are those who have committed as many mortal sins as there are hairs on their head. There is need only of consent to a bad thought or desire for the commission of a mortal sin. The consent of an instant is sufficient. O my God! how many bad thoughts, how many criminal desires, how many scandalous words, how many actions contrary to Your holy law and to the rights of conscience, how many omissions of essential duties during the space of fifty or sixty years? And what penance must be done

to repair so many disorders? Is it not enough to cause one to despair at the sight of them, did we not count on Your infinite mercy? Nevertheless, sinners, do not deceive yourselves; you must pay to the last farthing either in this world or in the other. It is our blessed Lord Himself who has said so. How astonishing, then, the madness of those who multiply their sins almost to the infinite, who "drink in iniquity like water," to speak the language of Holy Scripture, who think no more of a hundred mortal sins than of one! Oh, prodigious blindness! Oh, devilish state of soul! If a single grievous sin merits a great temporal punishment, for I suppose that it has been remitted in the Sacrament of Penance as to its guilt and the eternal punishment it deserved; if, nevertheless, the temporal punishment due to a single sin, according to the judgment of the Church, is so considerable, what will be the punishment of so many sins, of the prodigious number of crimes with which so many sinners find themselves burdened?

I have already shown you what is the judgment of the Church on this matter, but here is an example which ought to touch you sensibly: In the ninth century a nobleman having committed a crime—an enormous one, I avow, but one which can be in some manner excused—addressed himself to the Sovereign Pontiff to obtain absolution from him. Stephen V was the Pope who sat in the Chair of Peter. This Pope replied to the nobleman of whom I speak in these terms: "My son, I grant you the absolution of your sin, but it is on condition either that you enter a monastery to pass there the rest of your days; or, if you remain in the world, that you never eat flesh meat except on solemn

feasts, and that you abstain from wine all your life, as also that you abstain from your ordinary amusements. I could," adds the Holy Father, "give you a more rigorous penance; but if you perform these well, God will grant you the pardon of your sin; if, however, you do not fulfill them, you condemn yourself."

But what had he done, you will ask, to merit such a penance? He had his wife executed on suspicion of adultery; and he had this done in the violence of his anger. What do you think of this, my dear brethren? Does it not astonish you? Yet this conduct of the Pope was conformed to the pontifical canons received and acted on in the universal Church during many hundred years.

2. The fifth and last quality of satisfaction is exactness. This means to say that the penances that are imposed by confessors, and those that a person performs otherwise, ought to be performed with all necessary circumstances, as regards time, place, and manner, that are becoming. This condition is so much the more pressing as regards those circumstances that are essential, such as restitution, reconciliation, reparation of scandals, and other such like; and, with greater reason, those that regard immediately the honor and glory of God, and those that have been appointed in the holy tribunal; these ought to be performed entirely, and, as far as possible, without delay. But if it happens that a confessor imposes a penance which one can fulfill only with extreme difficulty, he should represent this difficulty to him with respect, and pray him to be pleased to impose another on him; and if a penance which one has accepted becomes for some reason impossible or very difficult in regard to his circumstances

and disposition, he should address himself to the same confessor, if he can, to have it changed, or to another, that he may learn from him what he ought to do.

3. These are, my dear brethren, the qualities and conditions that Satisfaction and penances ought to have that they may be sufficient and acceptable to the Sovereign Master, who weighs them in the balance of divine justice, and who rejects those that are not genuine. Have yours these characteristics? Do those that you have performed in the past inspire you with a true confidence? Examine yourselves seriously on a matter so important. Of how many grievous faults are not many penitents guilty on this subject? Some, very far from accepting the penances which confessors impose on them with joy and submission, and with an entire persuasion that they deserve far greater ones, receive them only with murmuring, impatience, and disgust. Others dispute and seek all kinds of pretexts to dispense themselves from accepting the penances which confessors cannot dispense themselves from imposing without betraying their ministry. Many diminish, disguise, or conceal entirely their sins for fear of having imposed on them a penance too severe in their opinion. We meet those who do not wish that confessors should enter too far into the secrets of their interior life, lest, knowing to the bottom all the malice of their sins, they might have reason for imposing a proportionate penance. Like a person who has a deep wound, you may touch him on other parts as much as you please, he does not complain; but if you desire to probe the wound, if you go near it, he cries out and is disturbed in an extraordinary manner, because pain compels him. Those penitents of whom I speak do not

take it ill that the confessor questions them on certain matters; but if he tries to interfere with their predominant passion, they complain; they are vexed. But it is there that the great evil is seated; it is in that region principally that it is necessary to apply the remedy.

There are others, lastly, who accept all the penances that are imposed on them, but they either defer performing them for a long time, or they perform them only in part, or they perform them with bad dispositions, or they neglect them entirely. Could there not be found among you, my dear brethren, some of those who are wanting in some one or other of those manners, perhaps in all? Are there not some of you who have omitted many times, either wholly or in part, the penances that were imposed on you, and which you have not thought of these many years? Yet these omissions can be in many cases mortal sins, and can cast those who are guilty of them into the misfortune of a sacrilegious Confession or Communion; nay, rather, into as many sacrileges as they have approached those tremendous mysteries since they came into this state.

4. Let us labor seriously, my dear brethren, to perform a true penance, to satisfy God and the neighbor as far as, and in the manner that, we are bound. Let us not wait to pay in the other life what we owe to divine justice, since satisfactions will there be without merit, and we shall have to pay them with the utmost rigor. But let us force ourselves to satisfy in this world, where sufferings and penances are meritorious as well as satisfactory, and where we can gain much at little cost, and in a short time. It is thus that we can procure for ourselves the happiness destined for perfect penitents.

ABSOLUTION. I

"Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them."—(John XX, 23.)

1. When our Lord beheld at His feet the paralytic who had himself lowered into His presence, He was touched at the man's faith and piety, and, addressing him, said: "Be of good cheer, My son, thy sins are forgiven thee." And the Pharisees standing by began to murmur among themselves, saying: "This man blasphemeth; who can forgive sins but God alone?"

A similar cry of protest has resounded throughout the Protestant world for the last four hundred years at the claim of the Catholic priesthood to the power of forgiving sins in the tribunal of Penance; and our separated brethren never cease to repeat the saying of the Pharisee: "These men blaspheme; who can forgive sins but God alone?"

Brethren, according to the reasoning of flesh and blood, a reasoning based on merely natural principles, (and I fail to see how Protestants, pursuing logically their method of inquiry in matters of religion, can ordinarily rise above the natural), there would seem to be cause for protest. For, who could ever have believed that our Lord would communicate to men—to weak and sinful men—this power most divine, this seemingly incommunicable right of the Deity? And we need not be surprised to hear from those who little understand the divine life and efficacy imparted to the

Church by Christ, the cry of astonishment and anger at the claim: "These men blaspheme; who can forgive sins but God alone?"

2. Now, it is of the exercise of this power of forgiving sins, or sacramental absolution, that I will speak to you to-day. It is the third part of Penance, as I have already explained, and it pertains to the essence of the Sacrament, since it is the *form* of it. Absolution consists of those words which the confessor pronounces over the penitent: "I absolve you from your sins." They are as a sentence of mercy, on the one hand, for penitents well disposed; for, at the moment they are pronounced, all their sins are remitted to them, and this sentence of remission, of pardon and absolution, is ratified in heaven. This is indubitable, according to the words which Jesus Christ has left us in the Gospel: "Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them."

But, on the other hand, these words of absolution are a sentence of justice, of anger and malediction for false penitents. For at the same moment that the priest says, "I absolve you," God says, "I condemn you."

Many do not pay attention to this, and imagine, first, that confessors are at liberty to give absolution when they please and to whom they will; and, secondly, that every absolution is good and valid, and that, provided the confessor has pronounced the words of absolution over one, he is pardoned and all his sins are remitted. Now, these are two errors equally gross and ridiculous.

I avow that it is only the ignorant that are capable of entertaining them, but the number of those is very great. Let us disabuse them, and say that it is not true that confessors can give absolution to whom and as

they please. When they give absolution unseasonably, that is to say, when they give it to the manifestly indisposed, they render themselves guilty of the profanation of the sacrament, and, at the same time, bring upon their penitents an extreme misfortune, since they are the cause of their committing a horrible sacrilege.

Confessors are strictly obliged to refuse absolution to certain penitents, and to defer it to others. They must refuse it absolutely to those who not only are not disposed to receive it, but who refuse to take the necessary means to render themselves worthy of it. Such are those who find themselves in any one of the cases I am about to adduce. Confessors must defer absolution to those who are not sufficiently disposed, but who have the will to dispose themselves, and who are resolved to take means to this effect.

Confessors ought to be "faithful dispensers," according to the saying of St. Paul, and not cruel dissipators. This obligation of not giving absolution in certain cases is founded on the rules which the Church has wisely established on this matter, and which are only an application of what Jesus Christ Himself prescribed for the administration of the Sacrament of Penance when instituting it. For He said positively, not only that sins would be *forgiven* those whom His ministers forgave, but, moreover, that they would be *retained* in the cases of those whom they retained. By this He made it evident that there would be occasions when it would be necessary to retain sins. And He gave His Church full and entire power to explain more amply His will on this article, as well as on others which regard the economy of the sanctification and the salvation of souls.

ABSOLUTION. II

1. I will lay before you now the principal cases in which confessors are obliged to refuse or defer sacramental absolution. These cases are given in the Councils of the Church, in the writings of the doctors and casuists, and we see them clearly detailed in the rituals and moral theologies, in such sort that one should be in very bad faith or extremely ignorant not to know them.

The first case where a priest is obliged to refuse or to defer absolution is in regard to a person who is ignorant of those principal mysteries of religion which a Christian is absolutely obliged to know and to believe in order to be saved, and of the duties of his state. Time does not permit me to explain to you what are those mysteries and what are those duties. The detail of them would be too long. I speak solely of those one cannot be ignorant of without sin. You have been instructed on them elsewhere, and nearly all the familiar instructions that you listen to, bear upon this matter. But remark that this regards not only those who are in the ignorance of which I speak, but also those who are obliged to instruct, or to procure the instruction of persons of whom they have charge. These are pastors and superiors, fathers and mothers, masters and mistresses, all the heads of families; and a confessor should not the less defer or refuse absolution to them when they are wanting in their duties on

this point than to those who are themselves in ignorance.

2. The second case for refusal of absolution is the habit of mortal sin, and sometimes even of venial sin. It is one of the greatest difficulties of moral theology to discern perfectly a sin of habit from one that is not, and especially in certain cases that are not rare. I leave this examination and this judgment to confessors who have great need of the light of the Holy Spirit and of using many precautions that they may not be deceived. In regard to venial sins of habit, a refusal of absolution is imperative when they put him who is subject to them in the proximate danger of sinning mortally.

3. The third case for refusal or for delay of absolution is the proximate occasion of sin. Such an occasion is that which causes him who is exposed to it always, or nearly always, to fall. We must put in the same rank dangerous professions and states—professions and states where one cannot be without danger of being lost. Now, amongst these there are some that are absolutely bad, and others that are so only relatively; that is to say, in regard to certain persons.

When the occasion is really proximate, or, when the profession or trade is absolutely bad, absolution must be refused till the penitent has quitted the occasion or given up the trade or profession. And in this matter there is no use in giving reasons of necessity or interest, such as penitents are wont to allege, any more than those which human respect is wont to suggest. We must not listen to such penitents when they say, for instance, that they cannot leave the house of this master; that they cannot give up this profession; that

they cannot separate themselves from this person; that they cannot cease taking liquor, etc., under different pretexts, which are never wanting.

Jesus Christ has replied to all objections, the strongest and the most specious that can be advanced on this matter, when He commanded us expressly to pluck out the right eye, to cut off the hand or the foot that would be to us a source of scandal and fall. By this He would have us to understand that were a person, a profession, a charge, or anything else as dear to us and as necessary as our eyes, or our hands, or our feet, we must of necessity separate ourselves from that person or that thing if such be for us a proximate occasion of sin.

4. The fourth case for refusal or for delay of absolution regards the restitution of goods to the neighbor, and the reparation of his honor and reputation. All those who have caused damage to the neighbor unjustly, or who retain his goods unseasonably; those who have taken from another his honor and reputation by lying or calumny, come under this heading and must be sent away till they have given satisfaction by the most efficacious means in their power.

5. Finally, the fifth case is on the subject of enmities. When a person is at enmity with his neighbor he must forgive him and be reconciled with him before he can be admitted to a participation in the sacraments.

These five cases, my dear brethren, are the most ordinary in which confessors are obliged to refuse or to defer absolution to their penitents. There are many other cases which demand refusal or delay of absolution, but we can reduce them to the five we have explained.

6. This conduct of refusal or delay of absolution is wise, necessary, and indispensable, for the confessor as well as for the penitent. It is so for the confessor, since the Church commands him to act thus, under pain of rendering himself guilty of a profanation of the sacrament; and it is so for the penitent, since it prevents him from rendering himself guilty of a sacrilege, and in order to procure his amendment and conversion. Besides, this conduct is conformable to right reason. For is it not evident that one ought not to give the sacraments to those who he has grounds to judge are unworthy of them?

Now, in order that the confessor may judge that his penitent deserves to be absolved, he must see in him signs of a sincere repentance for his sins, and of a firm resolution of not committing them again. And this is what he does not see in those who are found in the cases I have proposed; consequently, he cannot and ought not to absolve them till they place themselves in the dispositions that give him cause to judge that they are in a state to be absolved.

Let us hear with fear what the Fathers of the Church say on this point: "He," says St. Isidore, cited in the canons, "who continues to commit sins of which he would make us believe he repents, is not a penitent, but a mocker." "To do penance," says St. Gregory the Great, "is to weep over past sins, and to cease to commit new ones, for which it would be needful to weep anew." Tertullian adds: "Where there is no amendment, the penance is necessarily false, null, and useless," and St. John Chrysostom calls that penance where there appears no change, "a mask and a ghost

of penance." Judge now, my brethren, whether the ministers of this sacrament are wrong in taking precautions and in demanding of their penitents signs of a change and conversion before absolving them.

PREPARATION FOR CONFESSION

1. In the foregoing pages we have treated as clearly and succinctly as the subject will allow the great sacrament of penance. We have treated in a somewhat exhaustive manner its several parts and shown how necessary it is for penitents to bring to it proper dispositions for its valid and profitable reception. Here I think we cannot employ ourselves more profitably than by studying the method of preparing for confession, or for the worthy reception of this sacrament. I want to remark that there are found among penitents a great many faulty methods in that preparation.

Some, I regret to say, make scarcely any preparation at all. Wholly absorbed in worldly matters, and with a low conception of the spiritual life, they think that any kind of treatment is good enough for God, any kind of service is acceptable to Him; and for the reception of the sacraments they would seem to think that any kind of preparation is sufficient. And these, mark you, are not the least intelligent or the least educated in the community. They are often shrewd, worldly people, who will give their most serious attention to affairs of moment pertaining to business transactions.

Persons of this kind are seen to rush to the confessional with little or no regard to the awful solemnity of the sacrament. Others, again, though they have the

greatest respect for the sacrament, are ill-instructed as to the proper manner of preparing for it. As a consequence, they run serious danger of receiving it badly.

Some, as a preparation, merely say their beads or their accustomed prayers, a proceeding which of itself has no direct bearing on the reception of the Sacrament. Others read the preparation for confession as given in their prayer books, but without intelligence or devotion, so that they are scarcely touched in heart at all with penitential feelings. Finally, many exhaust themselves in preparing a long and intricate list of their sins with the circumstances, and leave themselves scarcely any time to conceive a heartfelt contrition for them, which is the essential quality required for a worthy and fruitful confession.

Seeing the many faults penitents are liable to fall into in preparing for confession, it is above all important that we learn the proper and approved method.

2. Well, here is what you are to do in accordance with the directions that are given in the Catechism, and which describe at once the simple and natural method of preparation and therefore the one to be adopted by you.

We will suppose that you have made up your mind for some time beforehand to go to confession, and have, therefore, made the remote preparation. Let us assume further, that you purpose to go to Communion the following morning.

Well, then, lay aside your beads and your prayer book for the time being and take your place in a part of the Church where you will find yourself absolutely alone with God. Put yourself in His holy presence with sentiments of sincere humility. Adore His sacred

Majesty and thank Him for inspiring you with the thought of approaching the holy tribunal, that you may obtain the pardon of your sins.

Then make the following petitions to the most Holy Trinity, and say, with your heart rather than with your lips: "O Eternal Father, Lord God Almighty, who didst create me in Thy goodness, who didst watch over me in life, and who didst send Thy only Son to redeem me from my sins, I beg of Thee by the Precious Blood of Thy only Son that was shed for me on Calvary, to give me grace to know my sins, to regret them with my whole heart, and to confess them sincerely, that so I may obtain pardon of them in the holy tribunal of penance."

Then address the Second Person of the same most Holy Trinity and say: "O Lord, Jesus Christ, who didst die for love of me on the Cross, who didst prepare salvation for me through the sacrament of penance, I beseech Thee that that saving Blood which flowed from Thy sacred wounds on the Cross may bathe my soul in the sacrament of penance, and that it may wash me from the deep stains of my sins. O good Jesus, give my poor soul the life that Thou didst purchase for me at the cost of Thy own precious life on Calvary."

Then address the Holy Ghost and say: "O Holy Ghost, Thou Consoler of afflicted souls, Light of the world, Sanctifier of the just, Strength of all who trust in Thee, grant that my poor soul covered all over with the stains and filth of sin, be cleansed and sanctified, and that I may with holiness and justice serve Thee all the days of my life."

Repeat these or such like prayers to the Holy Trin-

ity, not once, but repeatedly, till you feel your heart saturated with sentiments of contrition. Then, in words of heartfelt earnestness, beseech our Blessed Lady and St. Joseph, your guardian angel, and your favorite saints, before you come to the second part of your preparation, namely, the examination of conscience.

3. As to the examination of conscience, I do not believe it necessary for those who go to confession regularly, say monthly, or at least once in two months, to go through the table of the "ten Commandments of God, and the Commandments of the Church, and the seven deadly sins," as the instruction in the Catechism directs. For those who ordinarily keep a clean conscience such a formal examination is not necessary. If they have unhappily fallen into some grievous sin during the period, why, it will be staring them in the face night and day; it will be devouring them till they tell it in confession, so they cannot forget it. It will be, ordinarily, enough for you to spend four or five minutes in the examination of your conscience for the past month, and that examination is to be principally on the faults you have been in the habit of falling into. Let it be directed especially to two or three precepts that your past experience tells you you are most liable to violate, or two or three faults or vices that you have been addicted to.

But let me remind you of a thing that you must not forget in your examination of conscience. It is that you find out the number of times you have fallen into each species of sin. It is a common fault with penitents, even with those who are otherwise scrupulous and exact in the preparation and in the confession of the different sins they have committed, to neglect to ex-

amine themselves on the number of times they have fallen into different sins. Do not forget that it is essential to tell the number, and the reason is at once obvious. For each distinct act of sin is a distinct offense against God. It must, therefore, be declared in confession, in order to fall under absolution of the priest, and as confession from its very nature involves previous examination of conscience, the necessity of finding out the number of times you have fallen into any sin is imperative and must not be overlooked by you.

4. Let me now go on to the last and most important part of the preparation for confession, namely, exciting ourselves to a true and heartfelt contrition for our sins.

In order to come to a true sorrow for our sins, which is a purely supernatural disposition of soul, and can, therefore, be brought about only with the help of grace, we must, first of all, earnestly pray for it. This I have taught you to do in the first part of the preparation. But this is not sufficient, and in order to feel the evil we have committed, we must reflect deeply on one or more of the five motives which I have expounded for you in past instructions.

We must reflect, I say, on the enormity of sin, which earns for us the everlasting punishment of hell, or we must consider deeply the evil which would deprive us of the happiness of heaven, and so of the others.

We should reflect above all on the last and most perfect motive, the evil, namely, of offending a God who is so good and perfect. This motive is emphasized in a special manner in the act of contrition, given in the Catechism: "O my God, I am heartily sorry for

having offended Thee, and I detest my sins most sincerely because I dread the loss of Heaven and the pains of hell, but *most of all, because I have offended Thee, my God, who art so good and worthy of my love.*" And here we take the resolution of avoiding sin for the future: "I am firmly revolved by Thy holy grace never more to offend Thee, and to amend my life."

This, dearly beloved, is a short and simple method of preparation for confession, and it is within the reach of the simplest soul.

5. The preparation being made, the confession itself should be gone through exactly as directed in the Catechism or the other little works of devotion that are in the hands of all. And you are to remember that exactness is a virtue that must not be overlooked in our dealings with God, or in those things that have bearing on our relations with Him.

One point I wish to emphasize; it is that those who go frequently to confession, or those who do not ordinarily fall into mortal sin, must not forget to include in their confession the accusation of some sin of their past life. This is important, often essential, as without it there is danger of profanation of the Sacrament, a null and void confession, and even a bad confession, from want of due contrition for sin when receiving absolution.

These are, dearly beloved, some instructions on the subject of preparation for confession that I think it useful and even necessary to give you. Be careful to imbibe them, and, on occasion, to put them into practice.

And may the good God inspire you all with a salu-

tary reverence for, and an appreciation of, this great institution, which is the outcome of the love and mercy of our merciful Master, Jesus Christ, and the beneficent creation of His love for us on His triumphant Resurrection from the dead.

MARRIAGE A GREAT SACRAMENT

"There was a marriage in Cana of Galilee, and the Mother of Jesus was there, and Jesus also was invited and His disciples to the marriage."—(*John II, 1-2.*)

1. Happy indeed was the marriage of the young people referred to in this Gospel, a marriage that was honored with the presence of Jesus Christ, His blessed Mother, and His disciples; that is to say, with the holiest company that ever lived on earth. And beloved by the Master must have been those who merited such a condescension. And who shall say how many were the blessings poured out upon them from the inexhaustible source of the Sacred Heart? Not only were their souls enriched with the gifts of grace which sanctified them in their new state, but they experienced in a sensible manner, moreover, the effects of the goodness and providence of their Divine Guest. For, the wine failing at the marriage feast, our Lord, at the prayer of His holy Mother, performed in their favor His first miracle by changing water into wine.

This remarkable event in our Lord's public life and the underlying purpose of His presence at this marriage feast of Cana in Galilee, determine me to speak to you to-day on the important subject of marriage.

2. The first remark I have to make is that many nowadays do not hold marriage in the respect that it deserves. And when I say so, I do not mean to apply

my words at all to those who are outside the Church. It is natural that they, I mean the members of the hundred and one non-Catholic sects that exist in the United States, England and elsewhere, having introduced disorder into all religion, should, as a matter of course, degrade the institution of marriage.

I speak of Catholics, and I say, people who have the greatest respect for the other Sacraments of the Church; who prepare for their reception with the greatest care and reverence, often talk of marriage with flippancy; treat it as if it were a matter of mere temporal concern; enter the married state with scarcely any preparation, or without being animated with any motive other than a low, selfish interest or passion; and live in it without thought of its pressing duties and responsibilities.

3. Against such as these I raise my voice, and say with the Apostle: "Marriage is a great Sacrament!" It is a great Sacrament in the sight of God and of His Church. It is a great Sacrament; because it represents some of the greatest of the mysteries of our religion; the union, namely, of the Divine Word with mankind, and of Jesus Christ with His Church. For, as the Word of God, descending from Heaven, espoused our nature in such a manner that after the union of the two natures, the divine and the human, there is present but one Person; so marriage unites two human beings in such a manner that they in many respects form but one moral personality. And as the Precious Blood flowing from the Saviour's side on Calvary formed His Church, united her to Him in the mystic bonds of love and charity, and made her the mother of a progeny as numerous as the stars of heaven; so also the marriage

union was to be, in the mind and intention of God, the source whence should spring generations of men and women who were to people the earth with Saints and Heaven with souls of the beatified.

Moreover, as the union contracted by Jesus Christ with His Church is a union, one and indissoluble, a union that should last throughout all time; so it was God's will that marriage should be a union one and indissoluble; that is to say, that it be a union of one man with one woman, and at the same time so binding that it can be severed only by death—a union so strong that by its force it overcomes all other unions formed by nature or by the human will. This Adam declared in that prophetic announcement he made when introduced by God to his consort, Eve: "This now is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man. Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh."

4. Now marriage may be looked on either as a contract, or as a Sacrament, or, finally, it may be considered as a state of life. Speaking to an enlightened congregation like you, I need not labor to inform you that marriage was not always a Sacrament such as we revere it in the Church to-day, and we can distinguish two phases or stages in its history.

If we ascend to the origin of man, we shall find that marriage was instituted by God in paradise. This He did when, taking the founders of our race, He joined them in holy wedlock, and, blessing them, bade them "increase and multiply and fill the earth" with their progeny. It was thus the means appointed by God for the honorable propagation of the human race, who, it

was His will, should be derived by way of generation from these first two founders. As such it was a natural contract—a contract by which man and woman bound themselves to live in social intercourse; to be a help to each other in all the relations of life; and especially in the discharge of the sacred duty of rearing up their children in the love and fear of God. Thus it was in the olden time, both under the law of nature and under that of Moses, down to the days of Jesus Christ.

5. But our Blessed Saviour, having come on earth to reform mankind vitiated by sin, He would act in order and begin by sweetening the fountain of human society, the family, and endowing it with sacramental graces. Hence we see that the very first act of His public life was to preside at the nuptial contract and sanctify it. It was not, therefore, in the guise of a mere guest that our Lord attended at the marriage feast of this young couple. He attended in order that He might preside at the nuptial union, and bless and sanctify it. Hence, from this time, according to the common opinion of interpreters of Scripture, marriage takes its place as among the first of the sacraments in the order of institution, even as the sanctification of family life is, in its very nature and according to the intention of God, the first element in the sanctification of mankind and in the reformation of society.

From this consideration, dearly beloved, we can infer how holy is marriage; how great a part it plays in the purification of family life and the sanctification of mankind; and, hence, with what reverence it ought to be treated, as well by those who propose one day to receive it, as by those who have received it already.

6. As a sacramental state it accords with (and I want

to impress this deeply on the married parties who may be listening to me), it accords with the other sacramental states existing within the Church, such as is the sacerdotal or priestly state, in this, that it confers special helps for the proper discharge of the duties consequent upon it; and these, not alone at the time the marriage is contracted, but through all the days that the marriage union lasts. And even as the priest at his ordination enters on the possession of a right to receive throughout life special lights and graces to enable him to discharge the high functions of his sacerdotal office; so, also, in consequence of the state assumed by the contracting parties in marriage, they enter on the possession of a right to those special helps necessary for their state, such as to enable them to love each other with a pure, Christian love; to bear mutually with each other's imperfections, and to bring up their children in God's holy fear and love.

7. I have said, dearly beloved, that from the beginning God gave marriage two special characteristics—unity and indissolubility. It is true that, later on, He remitted the unity of marriage, as we see in the case of several of the patriarchs and others to whom He permitted a plurality of wives; and we know, moreover, that He tolerated the *libellum repudii,* or divorce among the Jews; but, as our Lord told the Pharisees, "from the beginning it was not so," and in the latter case we know "this was on account of the hardness of men's hearts."

Be the reasons as they may, the fact of their having been sanctioned or tolerated by God at all, raises some important questions which have a special interest for the people of this country and of our time. We see

every day the columns of the newspapers filled with divorces sought for and granted by the civil courts and at the sentence of the civil judges. We have, besides, in our vicinity the sect of the Mormons, who, up to recent times at least, practised polygamy, and who are said by many to do so still. What is to be said, then, of the practice of polygamy in our days, and what of the custom of looking for and obtaining a bill of divorce at the hands of civil judges?

As to the first question, let me say that polygamy as an institution was abolished by our Lord, who recalled marriage to its primitive purity and unity. This He did when in answer to the question of the Pharisees He replied: "Have you not read (in the law) that He who in the beginning made man, made him male and female" and *He,* that is, God (not merely Adam who uttered these words under inspiration), said: "On account of this a man shall leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife," (mark, his wife; not his wives), "and they shall be two (and no more), in one flesh." Polygamy as an institution was killed by that regulation of our Lord, and it has never since been tolerated in Christian society—and it was only the carrying out the traditions of our holy religion that the American people through their rulers refused full civil rights to the sect of the Mormons as long as they followed this lustful and un-Christian practice.

As to the custom of divorce, which is so common to-day and which is so great a blot on our American civilization, it also was abolished by our Lord, and on the same occasion. For, in answer to the Pharisees tempting Him, He replied that the putting away of one's wife, or divorce, was hitherto tolerated by God

solely "on account of the hardness of their hearts"; but that in the religion founded by Him it would not be so; "therefore," He adds, "they [the married couple] are now not two, but one flesh. What, therefore, God has joined, no man may part asunder (Matt. XIX., 4–8). And this ordination our Lord lays down more clearly and emphatically in Sts. Luke and Mark, where He is represented as saying: "Everyone that putteth away his wife and marrieth another committeth adultery, and he that marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.—(Luke XVI., 18; Mark X., 11–12.)

This fact, the indissolubility of the marriage tie, is admitted by the most upright of the members of the non-Catholic sects and it only shows the degeneracy of morals among the members of these sects consequent on their rejection of Catholic teaching and practice, that divorce has become so common as to be looked upon as an ordinary matter, and that re-marriage of divorcees, that is, public concubinage, is tolerated among them.

8. As to the assumption of jurisdiction by the civil authority over the sacred institution of matrimony, this also is one of the evil signs of the times, when "fools rush in where angels fear to tread," when sacrilegious hands are laid by the lay authority on an institution divine in its origin and essence, and thus pertaining solely to the supervision and jurisdiction of God's Church.

9. See then, dearly beloved, a great Sacrament truly in marriage; great in its origin, which is from the Almighty, and this while our first parents were still in a state of innocence; great in its elevation by our Lord

to the dignity of a Sacrament; great in its signification; since it is the symbol of the hypostatic union of the Godhead with the Sacred Humanity in the Incarnation, and of the mystic union of Jesus Christ with His Church on Calvary; great in its unity, which must never again be interfered with, and in its indissolubility; since "What God hath joined no man may part asunder"; great, finally, in its end, which is the sanctification of the family and society—the peopling of earth with saints, and of Heaven in the hereafter with the beatified. Learn, then, to pay to it the respect which is its due, you who propose to receive this Sacrament and to enter upon this state, by representing to yourselves high and holy ideals regarding it; and by preparing for its reception with reverent dispositions becoming its dignity and holiness, and its importance to your whole future. And you, who are already engaged in this state, correspond faithfully with its great and many graces; that, fulfilling its responsibilities with fidelity, and patiently bearing its trials, you may merit the reward of eternal life for yourselves and be the parents of a progeny of saints who will honor God by their lives in this world and possess Him forever in the next.

MARRIAGE—ITS FIRST CLAIM

"This is a great Sacrament, but I speak in Christ and in the Church."—(Eph. V, 32.)

1. In my former discourse when treating of marriage I considered it as a contract, as a Sacrament, and as a state. On that occasion I expounded its essential characteristics; its unity, namely, and its indissolubility. Cardinal Gibbons when treating of the same subject puts those characteristics somewhat differently in saying that it is the most ancient of all contracts, the most exclusive, the most sacred, the most inviolate and irrevocable.

It is the most ancient of all contracts, he says, for our first parents were the first contracting parties; the Garden of Eden was the scene of the union, and God Himself was the minister and sole witness of the espousals.

It is the most exclusive: for a husband can have but one wife, and a wife but one husband. A third partner is wholly excluded in the Christian dispensation from sharing in the union, and no other married union can take place until the death of the one or the other of the contracting parties parts them.

It is the most sacred of all fellowships; for the Eternal Father is its founder, Jesus Christ is its restorer and reformer, and the Holy Ghost is the divine fire that welds together two hearts in unquenchable love. Christ

raised marriage to the dignity of a Sacrament—"a great Sacrament," according to St. Paul. For it is the symbol of the union of Christ with His Church and of the Divinity with the Humanity in the Incarnation.

And lastly, it is the most inviolable and irrevocable of all contracts that were ever framed. Every other human contract may be lawfully dissolved but this. Nations may be justified in abrogating treaties with each other; merchants may dissolve partnerships; brothers will eventually leave the paternal roof and separate from one another. But by the law of God the bond uniting husband and wife can be dissolved only by death. For, "what God hath joined no man may part asunder."

2. Let me now touch briefly on another matter pertaining to the same Sacrament.

When Almighty God instituted marriage in the garden of paradise, the primary end He had in view was the propagation of the human race, which He willed should be derived from the honorable and becoming union of man and woman. To this effect He blessed our first parents and endowed them with fecundity, saying to them: "Increase and multiply and fill the earth" with your progeny. From that day one of the claims or rights of the marriage contract consists in the obligation of the married couple's so using marriage that offspring be capable of being begotten thereby; and that, furthermore, such offspring be preserved and fostered. And this claim is so essential to the Sacrament that the parties who contract on the condition of using marriage in such a manner as to frustrate or impede generation, or of limiting by unlawful means the number of children to be begotten by them, or of destroy-

ing the offspring so begotten before its birth, render the contract thereby null and void; and, this, because to the essence of the marriage contract pertains the obligation, and this a perpetual one, of using marriage according to nature.

3. Now, dearly beloved, as we look at the conduct of married couples all over this great commonwealth in relation to this essential claim of marriage, we see a widespread and still growing abuse of married life, where all kinds of expedients are employed to frustrate generation, or to destroy the progeny begotten before it is born; and this without regard to God, the Institutor of the marriage contract; or to humanity in general, which is outraged thereby, or even to the life of their own offspring, which they ruthlessly destroy.

4. We read in the classic authors of a giant who lived in Sicily. Horrid and monstrous was his appearance. A shaggy head and face surmounted a huge and uncouth body. One eye alone protruded from the center of his forehead, and when he appeared abroad a full-grown pine tree served him for a staff, as he strode along like a moving mountain. Huge tusks protruded from his ever-open jaws which dripped with foam and blood. And the bodies of two full-grown men formed his daily meal—after which he retired to his cave in the mountain side to sleep off in a drunken swoon the surfeit of his murderous repast. And as a result of his bloody raids the whole country around was depleted of its inhabitants.

My brethren, a monster more terrible and more ruthless in his devastations than Polyphemus has invaded this great country. Others may call him by different names. I call him "homicidal selfishness," and not the

bodies alone, but the souls, aye, the immortal souls of innocent babes form the toothsome morsel for his murderous maw. He always tries to do his work in the dark; and, hence, he blinds, as far as he can, one of the eyes—the eye of conscience—of those who are his dupes and who perform his murderous behests. Ah, but the light of that eye cannot be utterly extinguished; and, hence, in after life, through it there glimmer lurid lights of remorse that sting and torture the soul—hissing snakes that make their presence felt and render life a hell to those guilty ones, no matter how surrounded with worldly wealth or pleasure.

5. Beware, brethren, of that guilty monster; and no matter what may be the trouble you may have to meet in life; no matter what the difficulty in rearing a family, resolve that never will you appear before God hereafter in judgment with the mark of Cain upon your brow, your hands stained with the blood of your own offspring. Beware of the temptation! Beware of false teachers who tell you that families must be limited to the means and other circumstances of the married parties. These are blind guides who stumble themselves and drag others with them into the ditch.

6. The whole world stood aghast at the terrible destruction of human life in the great World War. The faith of many in God's kindly providence was shaken and they asked, "Is Christianity then a failure?" and, as was blasphemously said to me some time ago by one who had unhappily lost the faith: "If there is a God, He is a queer God who would let such things occur."

Others, and they the more thoughtful in the community, who in the beginning were inclined to look upon the war as the result of racial and commercial

jealousies, are now beginning to see in it a masterstroke of divine justice.

We know that for the greater part of a century the Christian world had for the most part turned its back on God, ignored His presence in the world of affairs, and trampled on His most sacred laws. We know, furthermore, that a wholesale destruction of infant life has taken place through the corruption that has invaded married life in this as well as in other Christian countries. It is fresh within the memory of us all that the miscreant who directed and carried out the notorious murder of the Bollinger baby justified himself on the plea that a thousand abortions were perpetrated daily in the city of Chicago.

And so it is in the other great cities of the United States: in Boston, in New York, in Philadelphia, in St. Louis, in San Francisco, in Seattle. So it has been in France, in England, in Germany.

Can the just God, who has said, "Vengeance is Mine, and I will repay," look on unconcerned and see those souls "made to His own image and likeness," and redeemed with the Blood of His only Son, murdered wholesale by their unnatural parents, and deprived forever of the sight of His Divine Essence, for which they were ordained, and not take vengeance on the murderers?

7. We read of a terrible occurrence that took place in Jewish times, an occurrence which made such an impression on the nation that eight hundred years afterwards our Blessed Lord would seem to refer to it in His terrible denunciation of the Scribes and Pharisees: "Fill up the measure of your fathers," He said to

them; "Serpents, spawn of vipers, how will you escape the damnation of Gehenna? For, lo, now I send you prophets, wise men, doctors; some you will kill; others you will crucify; you will scourge them in your synagogues, you will persecute them from town to town; so that all the innocent blood shed upon the earth may descend upon you, from the blood of Abel the righteous unto the blood of Zachary, son of Barachias, whom you slew between the temple and the altar. I say unto you of a truth that all those things must fall upon this present generation."

Who was this Zachary, son of Barachias, the fatal results of whose martyrdom were so remarkable that our Lord links his name with that of Abel, the type of injured innocence, and whose blood "called to heaven for vengeance?"

The Book of Chronicles tells us that he was a prophet who was slain in the temple by the people at the instigation of the wicked king Joas. And as a result of his murder in the very sanctuary, God brought down on the murderers the army of the Syrians, who slew the princes of the people, and carried away the spoils of their city and temple, and permitted the murder of the wicked king.

Nor was this all. For the Talmud, that great compilation of the records of the Jewish race, tells us that for two centuries and a half the blood of the murdered prophet gushed forth from the spot where he was slain, and could not be washed away. It tells us, further, that Nabuchodonosor, the great conquering king of Chaldea, who destroyed the city and temple, and carried the people away into captivity, saw in the tem-

ple the blood gush from the spot as bright as the day upon which it was first shed.

Fain to appease it, he brought certain of the rabbis to the place and slew them. Still the blood gushed forth with the same even flow. He seized some children who were returning home from school, and immolated them upon the same spot; nor yet was the blood appeased. He summoned certain young priests and massacred them there; and still the blood continued to gush forth. What shall I say? Nearly a hundred thousand victims were slain without checking the flow.

Whereupon, drawing nigh the spot, Nabuchodonosor cried: "Zachary, Zachary, thou hast destroyed the flower of thy people. Wouldst thou have me extinguish them utterly?" At those words the blood ceased to gush forth from the place; God's vengeance for the murder was appeased.

My brethren, in thinking over those terrible occurrences that are taking place in the world to-day, does not the haunting thought occur to us that the God of vengeance is punishing some colossal crime? And that crime, may it not be the wholesale murder of the innocent babes, by race-suicide, and that He will not be appeased till the flower of manhood perish, and whole peoples be left in mourning?

My brethren, I say again, beware of the guilty monster of parricide, of unnatural crime committed in the sanctuary of the married state. And no matter what may be the difficulty in rearing a family, resolve that you will not appear before God hereafter with the mark of Cain upon your brow, your hands stained with the blood of your own offspring.

Beware of the temptation, beware of false teachers who tell you that families must be limited to the means and other circumstances of the married parties. These, I say, are blind guides who stumble themselves and drag others with them into the ditch.

THE SECOND CLAIM OF MARRIAGE

I

1. In my last discourse I pointed out to you one of the essential claims or rights of marriage, that, namely, obliging the married couple to so use marriage that offspring be capable of being begotten thereby, and that, furthermore, such offspring be preserved and fostered.

To-day, let me treat of another right of marriage, namely, that demanding that it be not an occasion of sin to the one or the other of the contracting parties. This is shown by God's injunction to the Israelites as they were about to enter the Promised Land. And it is given in the seventh chapter of the Book of Deuteronomy: "When the Lord thy God shall have brought thee into the land which thou art going to possess, thou shalt make no marriages with the people who are living there. Thou shalt not give thy daughter to his son, nor take his daughter for thy son." And He gives the reason, "For she will turn away thy son from following Me, that he may rather serve strange gods; and the wrath of the Lord will be kindled and will quickly destroy thee."

2. It is a principle of the moral law that we can never wilfully and without grave cause go into the immediate occasion of sin. Now to contract marriage with one who is not of our faith is to go into the oc-

casion of the loss of faith, the greatest of all occasions, for it is a life-long occasion; and, furthermore, it is the most intimate, and nothing but the gravest reason in life can justify it.

Mark God's words: "Thou shalt not . . . for she will turn away thy son from following Me, that he may rather serve strange gods." And we see that in conformity with this principle Abraham, when he found himself, as the Scripture says, "old and advanced in age," called to him his faithful servant, Eleazer, and thus addressed him: "Swear by the Lord, the God of Heaven and earth, that thou take not a wife for my son of the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I dwell, but that thou go to my own country and kindred and take a wife thence for my son, Isaac." Hence we see also on the return of the Jews from captivity, under the leadership of Esdras and Nehemias, those of them who had taken wives from the pagan peoples among whom they lived were compelled by the high priest and the chiefs of the nation to dismiss them together with the children they had begotten of them. And only on their doing so did they offer hope that God would bless them and prosper their nation. And we see also St. Paul, who had treated so wisely of the duties and relations of husband and wife, grant the privilege to the converted pagan to dismiss his pagan wife and marry another if she would not live peaceably with him on account of his religion, and was otherwise a source of scandal to him and danger of the loss of grace.

3. This law of segregation from the family and social life of the members of false religions has always been among the chief preservatives of individuals, and

peoples from falling away from the true faith. Nay, and we see on the other hand, that social and family alliances with those of false religions have been the ruin of men the most distinguished in antiquity. "And after that men began to be multiplied upon the earth," says Scripture, "and daughters were born to them, the sons of God," that is to say, the descendants of the holy patriarch Seth, "seeing the daughters of men," that is; of the accursed race of Cain, "that they were fair, took to themselves wives of all whom they chose." And God said, "My Spirit shall not remain in man forever, because he is flesh; and his days shall be shortened. . . . And God seeing the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that all the thought of their heart was bent upon evil at all times (as the result of those alliances), repented Him that He had made man on the earth; and being touched inwardly with sorrow of heart, He said: "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, for it repenteth me that I have made him."

We know what followed:—the deluge and the destruction of the whole human race, save Noe and his family. . . .

To pass over innumerable examples of Scripture, let me bring before you one other, and this a very remarkable one. Solomon, King of Israel, was a saint from his youth, nay, one of the most lively figures of our blessed Lord Himself; He was, as Scripture lets us know, the very oracle of the Holy Ghost, whose every sentence was a parable of wisdom.

When he was of mature age, and blessed with prosperity and glory above all other men, he neglected

the warning of God, and took unto himself wives from the neighboring peoples, according to his fancy.

How did it all end? He who had been world-famed for his virtue and wisdom, by degrees fell away from the piety of his former years and became a reprobate. He turned away from the worship of the true God and offered incense to the false gods of his pagan wives and built temples to them; and thus he not only lost all the glory and virtue of the early years of his reign, but also, in the opinion of St. Jerome and others, his immortal soul. For Scripture, which is so much taken up with his words and his inspired writings, in no place hints even at the probability of his ultimate conversion.

What does all this teach us, my brethren?

Why, to keep ourselves free from close association with, and above all, from intermarriages with those of a different religion from ours. If we neglect this injunction of prudence and wisdom, and despise the teachings of Scripture and the commandments of the Church, I declare it will be with us as it was with those who took this foolish step before us. And, to quote again the words of Deuteronomy: "You shall make no marriages with those strange people. For if you do, they will turn you away from following the true religion that you inherited from your fathers that you may rather follow false religions; and the wrath of God be kindled and will quickly destroy you."

4. I know, dear brethren, that there may be exceptions (there are, very rare ones) to this general rule; and occasionally the Protestant party may be converted; may become even an exemplary Catholic, and

there results at times from such a marriage a pious Catholic family. Compelling circumstances and wise precautions taken beforehand may, though rarely, lead to happy results; and we have among us the example of many pious men and women who were converted to Catholicism only after their marriage.

But outside of those rare cases, where circumstances of necessity or duty intervene, we cannot with impunity and without risk violate the dictates of prudence. Neither can we disregard the counsels of Scripture, nor the teachings of the Catholic Church warning us against the occasions of sin and that which the Scriptures everywhere call an abomination and an adultery, namely, the falling away from the true religion and the offering to God of a false and corrupt worship.

I speak thus strongly on this subject, dear friends, for human nature is the same to-day as it was in the days of Abraham, and Moses, and Solomon; the evil of mixed marriages is the colossal evil of our time and country, and its fruits are the widespread apostasy from the Catholic religion that we witness among us. Look around and count the numerous apostates from religion, and the many fallen-away Catholics that are among you. See the many families here in your midst whose fathers or mothers were Catholics and who could point to a long line of Catholic ancestry. To-day they practise the Protestant religion, or no religion at all! They are not baptized even, and are aliens to every thought and sentiment that their ancestors once felt and lived up to. And why? Because of the evil and the curse of mixed marriages.

Let me then repeat for you once again the injunction of God through Moses: "Thou shalt make no mar-

riages with the people who are living there. Thou shalt not give thy daughter to his son, nor shalt thou take his daughter for thy son; for she will turn away thy son from following Me, that he may rather serve strange gods; and the wrath of the Lord will be kindled and He will quickly destroy thee."

II

DISCOURSES ON THE COMMANDMENTS

THE COMMANDMENTS—THEIR NATURE

1. Once, when our Blessed Lord was preaching, a young man came before Him, and, with a look of concern as of one possessed by some great thought, put to Him this all-important question: "Master, what must I do to possess eternal life?"

There was a great deal in that question of supreme importance to that young man. There is a great deal in it of supreme importance to us all, as on its proper solution, and on the action we take consequent on that solution, depend issues of eternal import.

But no less important, nay, still more worthy of our life-long consideration, is the reply of our Saviour. For, as the Gospel tells us, Jesus, looking on him with benignity, for He loved him, replied: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments."

Now, since we learn from this answer of our Lord that the keeping of the Commandments is the one great condition of our salvation, it follows, first of all, that we should try to acquire such a knowledge of them as we can conveniently arrive at, so as to be able to satisfy their claims upon us with intelligence and perfection.

That you may arrive at such a knowledge, we have determined to give a series of practical instructions on their chief headings in the following pages.

2. And, now, the first question it strikes one to ask when brought to reflect on this subject is: What are the Commandments?

The Commandments, if we consider them in their essence, are nothing more or less than the precepts of the natural law which were given us at our creation. They are the precepts of the natural law; that is to say, of that law impressed on our souls by God to be the proximate and rational rule of our conduct during life, and which is itself nothing else than the expression of the eternal law, or the most holy will of God commanding the natural order to be fulfilled, and forbidding its ordinances to be disturbed. This law was stamped on our hearts at our creation, and it is intimated to us by the very light of reason and by the instinct of our rational nature.

From this we learn how solemn and important is the duty of fulfilling this holy code, since its source lies deep in the infinitely holy nature of God Himself.

If we consider the Commandments in their present form, they are the solemn precepts promulgated by God from Mount Sinai to the children of Israel. These precepts were afterwards adopted by Jesus Christ and promulgated anew as the basis of the Christian law, to be observed by all who aspire to eternal life with God. "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments."

The former promulgation was made necessary by reason of the depraved condition into which the human race had fallen consequent upon the sin of our first parents. For, as a result of that great catastrophe, and of the disorder introduced into his nature by sin, the mind of man became so clouded as to perceive only obscurely or not at all, his most vital obligations, to the fulfilment of which was attached his eternal welfare.

The Almighty seeing this, and being a daily witness of the miserable condition into which the whole human

race had fallen, took pity on men, and determined to express in words the precepts of the natural law, which were already written in their hearts.

3. He therefore called up Moses to Him to the summit of Mount Sinai, and from out a cloud, and in the midst of the most awful solemnities, Himself dictated the law of the Commandments.

The Book of Exodus, that Book of the Old Testament that relates the history of the Jews during their forty years' sojourn in the desert, gives a graphic description of that great event. It tells us that on the fiftieth day after the Israelites had departed from the land of Egypt, the Lord commanded Moses to summon the people in their tribes and families, and to arrange them around the foot of the mountain.

"And now," say the nineteenth and twentieth chapters of this Book, "the third day was come, and the morning appeared, and behold, thunders began to be heard, and lightning to flash, and a very thick cloud to cover the mount; and the noise of the trumpet sounded exceeding loud; and the people that was in the camp feared.

"And when Moses had brought them forth to meet God from the place of the camp, they stood at the bottom of the mount.

"And all Mount Sinai was on a smoke: because the Lord was come down upon it in fire, and the smoke arose from it as out of a furnace; and all the mount was terrible.

"And the sound of the trumpet grew by degrees louder and louder, and was drawn out to a great length. Moses spoke and God answered him.

"And the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai, in the

very top of the mount, and He called Moses unto the top thereof.

"And the Lord spoke all these words:

"I am the Lord, thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

"Thou shalt not have strange gods before Me.

"Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth.

"Thou shalt not adore them, nor serve them: I am the Lord, thy God, mighty, jealous, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me.

"And showing mercy unto thousands, to them that love Me and keep My Commandments.

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that shall take the name of the Lord his God in vain.

"Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day.

"Six days shalt thou labor and shalt do all thy works,

"But on the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord, thy God; thou shalt do no work on it, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy beast, nor the stranger that is within thy gates:

"For, in six days the Lord made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them, and rested on the seventh day: therefore, the Lord blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it.

"Honour thy father and thy mother, that thou mayest be long-lived upon the land, which the Lord thy God will give thee.

"Thou shalt not kill.

"Thou shalt not commit adultery.

"Thou shalt not steal.

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house; neither shalt thou desire his wife, nor his servant, nor his handmaid, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is his."

"And all the people saw the voices, and the flames, and the sound of trumpet, and the mount smoking; and being terrified and struck with fear they stood far off,

"Saying to Moses: speak thou to us and we will hear; let not the Lord speak to us, lest we die."

Such, dearly beloved, is the law of the Commandments, a law which is to be the rule of our lives, and to the fulfilment of which God has attached the momentous affair of our eternal welfare. He that shall observe them, shall, according to the saying of our Lord, enter into eternal life. He that shall observe them not, shall be condemned.

Let the conviction of this awful truth sink deep into our hearts and fill us with earnest solicitude for their fulfilment.

And God grant that this solicitude may urge us to a true zeal in acquiring an exact knowledge of their nature and of the extent of their claims upon us, which is the first requirement, and the primary condition of their perfect observance.

THE COMMANDMENTS—THEIR SANCTION

"And the Lord spoke all these words: 'I am the Lord, thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt not have strange gods before Me. . . . I am the Lord, thy God, mighty, jealous, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing mercy unto thousands, to them that love Me and keep My Commandments."—(*Exod. XX, 1-6.*)

1. When a lawgiver promulgates a law to be observed by all the people, he first sets forth at the head of that law his titles and prerogatives, in order to give sanction to his commands, and show forth his claims on their obedience. It was with the same view that the Almighty, when He promulgated the Commandments from Mount Sinai, opened with those solemn and lofty words. In them He sets forth His titles and prerogatives, so many claims to our obedience, claims which are unanswerable, since there is no one who can dispute their validity or gainsay their greatness. These are four in number—His universal sovereignty, His supreme excellence, His unexampled goodness, and His power to confer unending reward or punishment.

2. The first title to our obedience to His Commandments comes from His universal sovereignty—"I am the Lord." It is a legitimate title to obedience that one has been set over another; for it is right that there be order in all things, and without submission to recognized

authority order cannot be maintained. Hence, holy Scripture commands us to obey those who are set over us; and this not for fear only, but also for virtue's sake, and even when those who wield authority are harsh and perverse. "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers; for there is no power but from God, and those that are are ordained of God; therefore he that resisteth the power, resisteth the ordination of God; and they that resist, purchase to themselves damnation." Now, if by the command of God we are obliged to obey temporal rulers and those whom they appoint to a position of authority over us, how much more are we not obliged to give a faithful obedience to the commands of God Himself, since He is the Sovereign Ruler from whom princes themselves receive their power of governing us? as it is said: "By Me kings reign and lawgivers enact just laws." Nay, He is not only the "King of Kings and Lord of Lords," supreme, uncreated, independent, who receives His sovereignty from no one, but he wields His authority over all domains and all orders of being. "I who command," says He, "am the Lord," i. e., the one supreme and independent Ruler to whom dominion essentially belongs, and to whom all other lords are but vassals, and whom a beck of My will could make or unmake in a moment.

3. Two no less valid titles to obedience are set forth in the second member of the preamble, where it is said: "I am . . . thy God who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

Now, the name of God signifies in all languages the Supreme Being whom the double light of reason and faith shows forth as the Creator of Heaven and earth. This God being eternal and independent, possesses of

necessity every perfection in an infinite degree, and is, therefore, worthy of all our homage and obedience. He is the great Almighty whose immensity fills all space and time. Infinite in wisdom, in goodness, in holiness, the perfection of His Being commands all reverence and esteem. But to this claim He adds another still, since He is *our* God—endearing name! And this name He lays claim to on many valid titles. Yes, it was He who "brought us out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." Now, the land of Egypt that was stricken with the plagues and covered with darkness is a figure of the pagan world, from which our God has called us to His admirable light through the teaching of His Church and the gift of the true faith which He implanted in our souls at Baptism. And the house of bondage represents the slavery to sin and the devil under which the world groaned till we were redeemed by the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ.

O dearly beloved, consider how valid are those claims to our submission which our God puts forth to us in this heading. What would we be to-day if God had not taken pity on us and saved us? Consider the state of the poor benighted pagans in Africa, in Asia, and elsewhere, "sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death." See those peoples great, and ancient, and highly civilized as some of them may be, bow down and worship stocks, and stones, and devils; pay homage to their passions and every insensate thing to which ignorance and their own depravity leads them.

4. And out of this state of darkness and slavery has God called us. Nay, He has endowed us with the freedom of the children of God. See the many gifts we possess in the holy Catholic Church. We have the true faith

which conducts us to the Kingdom of Heaven. We are surrounded on all sides with helps and graces—those Sacraments we are permitted to participate in; the holy Mass which it is our privilege every day to offer; the forgiveness of sins; the Holy Communion to feed and nourish us; and this our God who dwells continually for us on the altar. Truly, we can say with greater reason than did Moses, the leader of the Israelites: "neither is there any other nation so great that hath its gods so nigh them as is our true God to us, to hear the petitions of His people." And do not the words of St. John in the Apocalypse referring to the blessed in some way apply to us who are so privileged as members of the Holy Church? "And I, John, saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice from the throne, saying: 'Behold the tabernacle of God with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself with them shall be their God.' "

To accomplish this our Redemption, and to confer on us those other favors, see what our good Saviour has done and suffered for us. Consider His toils, His watchings, His fastings, His austerities, His incessant labors and sorrows during life, till at last He is brought to the suffering and humiliating death of Calvary.

Should not then duty and gratitude oblige us equally to the observance of the Commandments of God and to be faithful to them till death—aye, even though their observance cost us many a combat and many a trial and sacrifice throughout life?

5. But He still adds another claim and a no less pressing one; nay, considering the selfishness of human

nature perhaps the strongest claim of all, and that is our own interest; since He declares that He has the power to reward or punish us eternally. This He declares in the last member of the preamble: "I am the Lord, thy God, mighty, jealous, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me, and shewing mercy unto thousands to them that love Me and keep My Commandments."

Now, the motives of reward or punishment have at all times exercised a powerful influence upon human action; and no wonder, considering the essentially selfish nature of man. It is his characteristic as distinguished from the irrational creatures to do all his wilful actions for an end. They are impelled by invincible instinct in their operations; he on the contrary looks forward to the results of his acts and considers whether they will bring him good or evil.

And God Almighty, knowing all the folds of the human heart, and comprehending us to the inmost depths of our being, holds out to us this double motive for the observance of His Commandments as of all the strongest and the most lasting. Yes, we may forget the universal sovereignty of the Lawgiver; we may become unmindful of His supreme excellence; we may forget past benefits, and show ourselves ungrateful for present gifts. But there are two things that will always powerfully influence our actions, and these are the fear of punishments to come and the hope of future reward. Hence, His strongest sanction the Almighty lawgiver reserved to the end: I am the Lord, thy God, mighty in My power to carry out my behests and to reward or punish; jealous for the faithful observance of My law, and regarding every breach of it with pain and anger;

visiting the iniquity of evil-doers with chastisements of various kinds in this life, and with eternal punishments in the next; and even punishing their descendants to the third and fourth generation; and showing mercy unto thousands, to them that love Me and keep My Commandments; that is to say, showering the riches of My bounty on them in this life, and reserving for them the reward of eternal glory—the possession of Myself and a throne in My Kingdom for all eternity in the next.

6. Dearly beloved, I can add nothing to those motives. May they powerfully influence us throughout life, and make us adhere faithfully to the law of the Commandments. And to this effect may we keep them continually before us, and may we reflect daily on those four great truths: that God is our Sovereign Master, the Supreme Being; our generous Benefactor; and our judge, with power to reward or punish us eternally.

ANALYSIS OF THE COMMANDMENTS

1. In my introductory discourse on the Commandments I tried, in the first place, to make you sensible of the importance of knowing them well; in the second, to give you an idea of their nature, and of the causes which led to their promulgation by God on Mount Sinai. Let me confine myself in this instruction to setting forth a brief analysis of them.

First, their scope or aim is to regulate our lives in accordance with the will of God and the dictates of our rational nature; in other words, their aim is to intimate to us the duties we owe to God and to our neighbor. This is readily seen if we consider them in detail as they were promulgated by God on Mount Sinai, and as they are given in the books of the Old Testament.

When Moses came down from the Mount after forty days' converse with God, he carried with him the Commandments inscribed on two tables of stone. The first of these tables contained the first three Commandments, those that had reference solely to our relations with God. By them we are commanded to reject all false divinities, such as were worshipped by the Gentiles, and to adhere to the one true God, and to adore and serve and love Him alone. "Thou shalt not have strange gods before Me. Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not adore them nor serve them."

In the second, we are commanded to have due reverence for His holy name. And in the third, to set apart a portion of the time given us in life for His special worship and to the exclusion of all worldly concerns.

And here let me direct your attention to the little word "remember" prefixed to the Commandment. This, as the others, was no new precept on the part of God. From the beginning He exacted this service from mankind, of the sanctification of the seventh day in memory of His own great Sabbath, or the resting from His works; and this we learn as well from the records of pagan nations as from the early Jewish traditions.

But it was characteristic of human nature then, as it is unhappily to-day, to ignore the great ordination; and, hence, the injunction "remember." "Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work; but the seventh is the Sabbath of the Lord, thy God. Thou shalt do no work on it, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy beast, nor the stranger that is within thy gates. For, in six days the Lord made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore, the Lord blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it."

These three Commandments prescribe to us our duties towards our Creator, who, in order to their fulfilment by us, proclaims His prerogatives of our Lord, our God, our Benefactor, our Judge and eternal Rewarder. And, as we see, they subject our powers, interior and exterior, totally to His worship and service. In fact, the whole man may be said to be included in his thoughts, and words, and acts; since man may be

described as a creature who thinks, and speaks, and acts. And so, I say, these three Commandments subject us totally to the worship and service of God. The first regulates the thoughts and emotions of our hearts in perpetual fealty to Him; the second, our words; and the third, our actions, which must be at all times in complete subjection to His will, but on certain appointed days are to be wholly consecrated to His service and worship.

The decree is gone forth, dearly beloved. God has commanded. It is our duty to obey. Let it be our constant endeavor, therefore, so to regulate our thoughts, and words, and acts, that they may be ever employed in the service of our God who has so many titles to our service, worship, and esteem.

2. On the second table of stone were inscribed the other Commandments, which prescribe our duties towards our neighbor.

Now as to our neighbor, there are some who have special claims on our regard by reason of their more than ordinary relations with us; and there are others who have only common or general claims; and both these claims must be satisfied with charity and justice to all.

Those who have special claims on us and those also in varying degrees, are our parents, our children, our relatives, our superiors and inferiors; and those claims are looked after in the fourth commandment. And it is worthy of remark, first, that by the particular ordination of God the claims of those special ones are set down immediately after the Commandments that have respect to God Himself. "Honor thy father and thy mother," and the direction embodied in the Com-

mandment in regard to our parents is the exemplar of the conduct we must employ towards all those with whom we hold ties of special relationship; and, secondly, that among all the Commandments this one alone promises a reward even in this life in return for its faithful observance: "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thou mayest be long-lived in the land which the Lord, thy God, shall give thee." It would seem that the Almighty desires to offer a special inducement for the faithful observance of this Commandment of respect for parents, who are His representatives on earth in regard to their children.

So much for the first four Commandments. The last six have regard to our neighbor in common, and, as we shall see, are quite comprehensive in the prescribing of our duties towards him.

3. The fifth commands us to respect the rights of our neighbor in his person, which is under the divine protection, and to abstain from all unjust aggression on his life, and physical and spiritual well-being. "Thou shalt not kill."

The sixth safeguards the honor of the neighbor in his family, and is designed to preserve the dignity and sanctity of social life from assaults of unrestrained license and sensuality: "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

The seventh teaches respect for the rights of our fellow men pertaining to goods of fortune; those goods given them by God to minister to their necessity or comfort here below: "Thou shalt not steal."

So much as to our acts in reference to our fellow men. And here let me remark that the Commandments, being given to recall to our minds the precepts of the

natural law already graven on our hearts, and intimated to us by the light of natural reason, give only the chief headings, and that underlying those short precepts there exists the most comprehensive import, an import which subjects the whole man to their jurisdiction. This we shall see more clearly from the consideration of those that follow.

In the eighth we are commanded to speak of our neighbor, of his doings and personality, with justice, truth, and charity, and to abstain from all that would injure him or unjustly lessen him in the esteem of his neighbors, or tend to deprive him of his reputation or character: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor."

And again let me remark that it is not necessary that what you say of your neighbor be a falsehood in order to offend against this commandment. What you say may be as true as that the sun is in the heavens, but that gives you no right to publish it. To make known to others, for instance, the secret faults of your neighbor, is like stealing the goods of a spendthrift. That a man squanders his goods in foolish excesses is his own affair and gives no passer-by the right to rob him; and, so, the secret or quasi-secret faults of the neighbor are his special affair, for which he will have to account before God, and no right is given to any unauthorized persons to make them subject for public gossip; and the person guilty of such conduct unjustly deprives that neighbor of his reputation, and is held before God as a robber of that neighbor's good name before his fellows.

But it is not alone that the Commandments regulate our exterior acts and words in regard to our fellow men. This they do in common with the laws of civil govern-

ments, which, as far as they are laws worthy of the submission of their subjects, are but applications of it and founded on it. That which shows the superiority of God's government of us and His sovereign dominion over our whole being, is that He prescribes laws for the regulation of our inmost thoughts and wishes. And, hence, in the ninth and tenth Commandments we are forbidden to think or desire those things that we are forbidden in other Commandments: "Thou shalt not covet," etc.

Such, dearly beloved, is the scope and aim of the Commandments: and we must admit, as I have already remarked, that they are most comprehensive and take under their jurisdiction the whole life of man, both as to his exterior and interior actions. It was only God, whose wisdom is infinite and whose dominion is supreme, that could thus subject a creature like man to so universal and salutary a law.

4. And now, dearly beloved, the end. It is the glory of God and our well-being in this world and in the next. It is the glory of God; for God is glorified in the fulfilment of His own eternal decrees, and in the carrying out of that beautiful order He contemplated in the world at its first creation. It is our well-being here, and this is guaranteed to us by the exact fulfilment of those religious and social duties where, on the one hand, the yearnings of our souls are satisfied by intercourse with God, our Creator and Last End; and, on the other, the rights of each one are safeguarded. And it is our well-being in the world to come. At the same time, that the virtuous fulfilment of our duties to God and man disposes the soul to righteousness within herself and imparts to her an ineffable peace and satisfaction, it merits

an eternal reward and prepares for a happy eternity.

O dearly beloved, may you look on the Commandments in this light; you will find in them the charter of your liberty, the groundwork of your happiness. Love them, practise them, make them the rule of your conduct during life. And to this effect, "meditate upon them," as the Lord says to us in the book of Deuteronomy, "sitting in your house; walking on the way; at lying down, and rising." Thus will you satisfy God's claims upon you during life, and earn for yourselves the beatitude promised by the Psalmist: "Blessed is the man whose will is to do the law of the Lord, and who meditates on that law day and night; he shall be like a tree that is planted near the running waters," like that majestic growth which the prophet contemplated as rearing itself in the glory of foliage and flower, and which "brings forth its fruit in due season." You will put forth here the foliage of holy thoughts and aspirations, and the flowers of good works; and you will bring forth the fruit of merit, to be garnered in the eternal hereafter, in the paradise of God.

THE NECESSITY OF FAITH

"And Jesus, hearing this, marvelled, and said to them that followed Him: 'Amen, I say to you, I have not found so great faith in Israel."—(Matt. VIII–10.)

I

1. Profound, indeed, must have been the faith of this good pagan which called forth the admiration of Jesus Christ, and great the virtue which drew so ready a response from the infinitely charitable Heart of the Saviour!

And who shall say what treasures of grace such a faith merited? Not only did this man obtain the instant cure of his afflicted servant, but we may well believe that his after life was rewarded with a call to the true religion of Jesus Christ.

It is of the necessity of this virtue of faith that I desire to speak to you to-day. And I am the more desirous to do so, since the denial of the necessity of faith is one of the chief heresies of our age.

In studying the ever-shifting doctrines of Protestantism, nothing strikes one as more remarkable than the complete somersault which Protestants have executed in regard to the dogma of the necessity of faith.

With Luther and the other early reformers faith was everything, and the ancient and venerable practices of the Catholic religion were as nothing. With them there

was no need of prayer or good works; there was no need of the Mass, or Confession, or fasting, or almsdeeds, in order to be saved. Faith ON the Redemption wrought by Jesus Christ took the place of all these. Nay, according to Luther and others, these were obstacles to salvation, rather than means thereto, inasmuch as they took away from the honor of the Redemption accomplished by Jesus Christ.

With Protestants of our days the very opposite doctrine is in vogue; and scarcely any of you that has had relations with Protestants but must have observed it. With them, faith, that is, belief in the dogmas of the Christian religion, is regarded as unnecessary. It matters not, they say, what religion you profess; what doctrines you hold; what articles of belief you reject, even if they are the most fundamental, as, the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity; the Divinity of Jesus Christ; the doctrine of original sin; the eternity of hell; the necessity of Baptism.

It matters not, they say, whether you believe or reject these truths, or others, provided you lead a respectable, inoffensive life, and practise benevolence towards your fellow men. Whether you be Protestant or Catholic; a member of the High Church or of the Low Church; Episcopalian or Nonconformist: all these denominations are only so many branches of the one true Church, "so many roads leading to the same home."

2. In opposition to those vague and shifting tenets, we hold inviolably that faith, that is, submission of the mind and heart to the doctrines of a heaven-sent teacher, is absolutely necessary, both as a sacrifice and as a remedy. As a sacrifice, God demands it of us; and nothing can dispense us from it;—as a remedy, God

has attached to it our salvation, and nothing can supply for it to us. Or, to put it in two words: without faith there is no religion; without faith there is no salvation.

First of all, I say there can be no religion without faith. What is religion? Religion, according to St. Augustine, is "the true worship of the true God." In other words, "it is the true manner of serving Him in order to render ourselves worthy of Him, and to attain to a union with Him."

Now, without faith there can be no true worship of God—no true or useful manner of serving Him; and hence, no means of rendering ourselves worthy of Him, or of attaining to a union with Him. For, it doesn't please God that we make our religion consist, as the Protestants do, in an arbitrary worship that we cull out ourselves from our imagination.

"Life eternal," says our Lord, as explained by St. Thomas, "the first beginning or entrance on the way that leads to life eternal, consists in knowing Thee, O my God, who art the true and living God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." Now, it is faith, and faith alone, that makes us know this living and true God, and Jesus Christ, His only Son, the blessed Trinity being the most incomprehensible of all mysteries. It is in this faith and in the duties that it prescribes, that true religion consists. God has imposed the obligation of it in all time. He has made of it the essence of the worship that is to be offered to Him. He has never dispensed anyone from it.

3. God has imposed the obligation of faith on His servants in all time. Does He wish to raise Adam after his fall, and teach him the manner of becoming united to Him again when he has had the misfortune of separat-

ing himself from Him by sin? He proposes to him a mystery to be believed by him, and the abridgment of all mysteries. He promises him that "there should appear the Son of the Woman who would crush the serpent's head"—a mystery which from that time forward makes the abridgment of the religion of sinful man, the great object of his faith, the foundation of his hope, the principle of his salvation.

By promising to men a Saviour whose grace should be the remedy of all their maladies, He obliged them to believe and hope in Him. He wished that from that time man should believe what he did not see: that he should hope for what he did not deserve to receive, but which God in His mercy wished to give him—that he should expect his salvation through a God hidden under the weakness of the Son of the Woman; and without this belief no one has been able to participate in the merits of the Saviour.

Does God wish to contract an alliance with Abraham? It is by faith that He does so. He renews in his favor, and explains to him more definitely, the ancient promise made to the first man, and the memory of which was so religiously observed in the family of the early patriarchs. He promises to him that he would have a son, and that "in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed."

Abraham believes without hesitation; because God has spoken. He considers not that he is too old; that Sara, his wife, is sterile, and, moreover, beyond the age of conceiving. "He hoped against all hope," says St. Paul. He believed; and it was this faith that "was imputed to him unto justice."

Does God renew His alliance with the people of Is-

rael by the ministry of Moses? He demands faith in the truth of His promises. It is the essential condition of that alliance. He Himself prescribes to them both what they must believe, and what they must do in consequence of that belief.

The prodigies that He works in favor of His people are only "the figure and the shadow of those things that He prepares." The law that He gives them is only "the pedagogue," the guide which should lead them to the Messias. The sacrifices that He prescribes are only the figure of the Great Sacrifice which is to save the world. Moses himself is, in the household of God, only the faithful servant who is to prepare the world for the reception of His only Son. The end of his ministry is to make known to the people of Israel the fact that God in later times will raise up in their midst "the Great Prophet, whom they should hear." "It was of Me that Moses wrote," says Our Lord; and it was He, in fact, who was the true end of the old law.

If the Son of God descends on the earth to save men; if He comes to establish the worship of the true God; it is by faith that He wishes we should become united to Him. It is to faith He attaches His favors and graces. If He cures the paralytic; if He heals the servant of the centurion; if He allows Himself to be overcome by the holy importunities of the Canaanite woman; if He gives health to the woman with the issue of blood; if He remits the sins of the penitent: it is through the merits of faith that He accords these graces and those other spiritual ones of which they are the figure. "Believe," says He, "and all things are possible to you"—everything will be given you; He says to one. "Be it done to you according to your faith"; He says to an-

other. The measure of the people's faith is the measure of the graces accorded them. "Do you believe," He asks of Martha. "Yes, Lord, I believe," she replies; and, behold enough to give life to one four days in the grave, and whose body was already beginning to emit the odor of corruption. Thus you see that God imposed the obligation of faith in all times, and He has never dispensed anyone from the practice of it. It is His will that all religion take its origin in this fundamental virtue; and all other acts of religion, such as adoration, praise, thanksgiving, sacrifice, prayer, fasting, almsdeeds, be, as it were, its off-growths and products. How great, then, the error of those who would make all religion consist of Bible reading, prayer, acts of benevolence and so-called moral uprightness, while rejecting this first and fundamental one of the theological virtues.

II

1. Again, it is in faith and in a true and living faith, that God had made consist in all time the essence of the worship that is due to Him. This I purpose showing you now. And to this effect let me quote, first of all, the infallible authority of Saint Paul: "Without faith," says the great Apostle, "it is impossible to please God."

Does not this show at a glance the absolute necessity of faith as the groundwork of religion and that God has made of it the essence of the worship that is to be offered to Him? It is by faith, then, that all those have pleased God who have ever had the happiness of pleasing Him. It is by it that the saints have merited the ad-

vantageous testimonies they received in holy Scripture, and especially in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

By what, in fact, did Abel offer to God a sacrifice so different to that of his brother Cain and so agreeable to the eyes of God? "It was by faith," says the great Apostle. "It was by faith that the just Enoch merited to be taken out of this world, which was not worthy of him. It was by faith that Noe was made the inheritor of justice, which he announced to an unbelieving world. It was by faith that Abraham quitted all at the first order of God; that he regarded himself as a stranger in the land which God had promised to him; that he regarded it only as a figure of a more excellent inheritance, of a city more stable, and of a happier native land. It was by it that he merited that God should speak to him and should be in truth his God. It was by faith that he offered to sacrifice his only son and the hope of his old age; and it was this faith that made the merit of his sacrifice.

It was by faith that Moses preferred the sorrows and reproaches of Jesus Christ to all the riches of Egypt and all the delights of the court of Pharao. It was by faith that Samson, and Jephthe, and David, and all the other prophets pleased the Lord, and that they offered Him a worship worthy of Him. It was by faith that bad women even, as Rahab, and strangers, as Ruth, merited to be admitted into the society of God's people, and to be made inheritors of His promises.

What more shall I say? The time would fail me if I tried to follow in detail and bring before you all the saints and show you that it was by faith they became what they were; that it was by it they triumphed over

kingdoms, accomplished justice, and obtained the effect of the promises.

"It is faith," says a Father of the Church, "that leads the neophyte to grace by conducting him to Baptism. It is faith that justifies the believer; that restores to penitents the goods they had lost; that forms and perfects the just. It is faith that produces and preserves the purity of virgins, widows, and the married. It is faith that sanctifies ministers of the Lord. It is faith that prepares us for Heaven and makes us equal to the angels."

Faith is, then, the soul of religion and piety; and without it there can be neither solid piety, nor true religion.

2. Moreover, God has never dispensed anyone from it. All those whom He has called to Him, He has called by faith. It is faith that makes the true life of everyone that is truly just, Jew or Gentile, Greek or barbarian, freeman or slave, man or woman, without distinction of condition or country or sex. "Man," says the great Apostle, "is not justified except by the faith of Jesus Christ" (Gal. II, 16). "Before God," he says again, "there is neither circumcision or uncircumcision": we belong to Him by faith only, in as much as we become new creatures by faith.

What esteem, then, ought we not to have for the precious gift of faith, and for the ineffable grace which makes us true believers? What thanks do we not owe to God for this inestimable gift, and what care ought we to take to preserve it, and make grow and flourish in us this precious seed of eternal life? There is then nothing more necessary than faith regarded as a sacrifice.

III

1. It is not less so as a remedy. Lest I weary you by elaborate arguments, let me only quote for you one passage from the Gospel.

When our Lord was sending His Apostles to apply the fruits of the Redemption through the medium of the Sacraments, there was one condition He specified without which this great remedy could not be applied to our souls, and that condition was faith. "Go," says He, "teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." And mark the words that follow: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned." The unbeliever shall be condemned, because it is only through faith in Jesus Christ that the merits of the Redemption can be applied to our souls; and without it all the other means, such as prayer, the Sacraments, fasting, alms-deeds, and good works, can avail us nothing; because without it all these works are dead and cut off from the source of supernatural life that lies hidden in the fundamental virtue of faith, which, for this reason, is called by the Council of Trent "the root and seed of our justification and of all supernatural life."

How greatly, then, do they err (and they are in our day a very numerous class) who make little of dogma in the teaching of religion, who say that one religion is as good as another, and that all that is required of us is to lead an inoffensive life and to practise justice and benevolence towards our neighbor.

2. Let it be your constant study, therefore, dear brethren, to nourish and foster within you this most

necessary virtue of faith; and this you shall do by trustful prayer; by holy reading; by assiduous meditation on the truths of our holy religion; by frequent recitation of the Apostles' Creed; and by repeated acts of the virtue itself, which, like every other habit, grows and is strengthened by practice. And take heed that you avoid the occasions of sinning against it, either by reading infidel or heretical works, or by frequenting the company of irreligious men and women, or by making bosom companions of members of false religions, or by intermarrying in their families; or, finally, by any other practice that may weaken or endanger within you the loss of this most precious and divine of God's gifts.

Be convinced, then, of the necessity of faith as the primary act of religion; and be prepared at all times to submit your reason and judgment to its superior light. Prize it as God's greatest gift to man; and, as was so happily enunciated by the fathers of the Council of Trent, "the foundation and the root of all justice."

FALSE TEACHERS

"Beware of false prophets."—(Matt. VII, 15.)

I

1. This instruction of our blessed Lord is taken from the third part of the Sermon on the Mount. Now the Sermon on the Mount is a summary of the teachings of our Lord in the early days of His public life. It is made up of a series of discourses that were preached down in Galilee, a pastoral and agricultural country; and the Divine Teacher, as was His wont, took His figures from the objects His auditors were most familiar with. Here He represents false teachers under the figure of a wolf, but of a wolf concealing the fierceness of his nature under the cover of one of the sheep, and for his own wicked purpose: to deceive and betray them.

2. "Prophet" in Scripture is a word from a Greek root, which means to announce or interpret: and it means a teacher. Such prophets God raised up among the Israelites from the beginning of their history. They were inspired by the Holy Ghost, even as afterwards the Apostles. It was the prophet's function to instruct the people as preachers of God's word.

The difference between the prophet and the Apostle was, that the former foretold the future, and was the medium of revelation from God to man; whereas, the apostle was, as the name signifies, a messenger, or one sent to bear to mankind the revelation made by Jesus Christ.

But it is characteristic of the devil to try to counterfeit the works of God, and thus deceive men. Hence, he raises up in every age men filled with his spirit, the agents of his malicious designs. And they, recognizing their mission from him, usually put on his character of deception in order the more effectually to compass their evil ends. Our Lord points out this distinguishing trait to His hearers, by telling them that they came in the clothing of sheep, the most homely and amiable of animals, but that they were in reality ravening wolves, whose design was to slay and tear to pieces their victims.

And here, abruptly changing His figure, for He is speaking to simple peasants, He convinces them in terms of another of their avocations, that of orchardists. "By their fruits you shall know them"; i. e., to be the agents of the devil. For just as a good tree cannot produce bad and poisonous fruit, nor a poisonous tree, sweet and wholesome fruit; so, neither can a teacher inspired by the devil produce good results in the after life of those who imbibe his teaching; but a good teacher, good results; and a false teacher, evil results.

Is not this what we see in every age—the ravages wrought in society by false teachers?

Our Lord had special reasons for warning the people of His time and race against the fell results of false teaching and false teachers. For not only did the Scribes and Pharisees follow Him everywhere, and contradict the good influence of His life and teaching; but He foresaw that, immediately after His Crucifixion, and as the result of their rejection of Him, the devil would send a whole generation of false teachers among them, and lead them to utter destruction.

3. Our Lord goes on by a matchless force of oratory to sum up, in the concluding passage of His discourse, the results which ever follow from false teaching. "Not everyone who saith to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he who doth the will of My Father who is in Heaven, he shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." For the ultimate results of the teaching of false prophets is to lead their hearers to a false security as to their salvation, and to make words take the place of deeds.

The Saviour tears to pieces any such assumption, and asserts for the hundredth time that salvation is to be gained only by the practice of virtue, and the leading of an austere Christian life. It is the one method pointed out in all Scripture, and the one that brings home to us the stern truth that "with fear and trembling, we must work out our salvation," and that "only he that perseveres to the end shall be saved."

4. In the last sentence of the discourse, Jesus points to the end of the false prophets themselves. For He continues: "Many shall say to Me on *that* day," i. e., on the Day of Judgment, "Lord, Lord: have we not prophesied in Thy name, and cast out devils in Thy name, and done many miracles in Thy name? And then will I profess unto them: I never knew you. Depart from Me, ye workers of iniquity."

II

1. Such, dearly beloved, is the interpretation of this famous text, and the objects immediately aimed at by our Divine Lord. How applicable the whole passage is to the teaching and the circumstances of our time!

For is not the world to-day full of false prophets; and do not those false teachers ordinarily come before the people whom they would deceive, in the clothing of sheep?

What are the teachers of that pretended system of religion that covers the greater part of two continents, but wolves in sheep's clothing? They promise the people salvation through reliance on an empty formula of faith, without the necessity of performing the austere practices of Christian virtue, and without the help of the Sacraments. See the sad moral condition of the peoples of those great countries, as the result of listening to their false teaching.

What are the teachers of Socialism, and Bolshevism, and the other kindred economic and social heresies, but false prophets who strip and despoil the people?

What, if not false prophets, are the many doctrinaires who in our high schools and universities teach material evolution which would deny the existence of God, the Creator? They rob the immortal souls of their pupils of the patrimony of their faith, and would make of them the leaders of infidelity to the coming generation. See the fruits of their false teaching in the lawless and putrid condition of so many of the younger generation to-day. Who are the many shameless teachers, male and female, who go about the country ventilating their doctrines about birth control; and the emancipation of women from the lawful ties of matrimony; and the lawfulness of abortion by medical practitioners; and the subjection of peoples by wiles and force, in violation of the principles of justice; and the many other false systems imposed upon the world in our day, who are all these, but false prophets inspired by the father

of lies to deceive and demoralize the people of this generation and to ensnare them into the net of the devil?

And besides these many agencies of evil, how many others coming from a demoralized press; and the many immoral dance houses, and the disreputable movie shows, where whole generations of our youth of both sexes are swallowed down into the vortex of an immoral and dissolute life? What are those, but false prophets sent out in droves from the mouth of hell to tear and slay the people?

2. O brethren, beware of those false teachers, men and women, and those detestable agencies of perversion with which the world is flooded to-day. What could be the fruit of such teachings and such teachers, but that which we see around us in the deluge of immorality and crime that threatens to submerge society and bring on it the curse of an outraged God?

Beware of all such agencies and their insidious propaganda and adhere to the one true organ of the Good Shepherd, the Catholic Church. She is the sole agency created by Christ to be the teacher of all future generations; the one ark of salvation in the midst of the deluge of error in which the world is submerged.

Adhere to her teaching, which tells us that in one way alone is salvation to be found, viz., in adherence to the principles of faith as inculcated by her and by the practice of the Christian virtues. "He that doth the will of My Father who is in heaven; he, and he alone, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven."

THE OBLIGATION OF LABOR

"Why stand ye here all the day idle?"—(Matt. XX, 6.)

I

1. Without entering into the explanation of this parable of the laborers, the spiritual sense of which has been often explained to you, I desire to make some remarks on the precept of labor which this reproof of our blessed Lord to the idlers in the market place alludes to and presupposes. In doing so, I address myself, not to habitual idlers, some of whom are to be met with about every town, men and women "born to eat," to use the words of the poet, who are the pest of family life and the bane of religion. These I consider it a loss of time to speak to; since they are beings without honor, without soul, without conscience, devoid of every vestige of solid natural virtue which alone constitutes the basis of the supernatural life.

I address myself rather to men and women who take life seriously—Christians who make an effort to discharge their religious and social duties; but who unhappily only too often give way to murmurings and complaints in the midst of their work, and who thus lose the supernatural reward work merits when gone through with the dispositions which ennoble and sanctify it.

Permit me, then, to say, in the first place, that to work is an obligation attached to the condition of our being. When Almighty God placed our first parents in Paradise, besides the precept which He gave them of abstaining from the fruit of the tree of knowledge, there was another, and it was that they should work. "And the Lord God," says the book of Genesis, "took man and placed him in the Paradise of pleasure to dress it and keep it." Here we see that, though Adam was vested with wondrous gifts of body and soul, and though he was still living in original innocence; yet the Almighty subjected him to manual labor—"He placed him in the Paradise of pleasure to dress it and keep it."

It is true that to our first parents in the state of innocence bodily labor was an agreeable diversion rather than a painful and humiliating muscular exercise; but still, to labor was man's condition from the beginning, and only by subjecting himself to it could Adam persevere in grace, even before his fall.

This condition of our being has been recognized by the human race in all times; and we see the most famous peoples of antiquity hold the laborer in honor and treat idleness as a crime.

Among the Egyptians every subject was obliged to give an account of the work done by him during the course of the year to the overseer of his district. And if he could not give a satisfactory account of the employment of his time he was expelled from the country to which he was forbidden to return under penalty of death. And so important did the Greeks consider the obligation to work that, though their laws compelled children to support their parents when they grew in-

capable, or fell into want; yet they allowed one exception, and that was with regard to those parents who neglected to give a trade to their children in youth. For this neglect the State considered them undeserving of assistance in their old age or misfortune.

How unworthy, therefore, the conduct and maxims of many Christians in our days when put in comparison with the conduct and maxims of those wise pagans! How reprehensible the sentiments of those amongst us who look upon manual labor as a degrading occupation, and who think themselves disgraced by being obliged to put their hand to anything that would gain for them an honest livelihood! How dishonorable the life of those young men and women who spend their days in idleness and play, squandering the precious time the Almighty has given them to labor for eternity!

Shameless idlers! I address you in the words of the Wise Man: "Go to the ant to learn wisdom." For, that minute creature, by its industry to provide for itself during the winter, has been given you by God as a preceptor of your duty to labor and provide for your future welfare. Learn, no matter what may be your position in life, that you are naturally subject to a condition of labor, according to the remark of that wise king who, when speaking of royalty, said that if God had not intended kings to labor, He would not have given them hands like other people. Learn from the teaching of our blessed Lord that idleness is a sin that merits hell fire; since He tells us in the parable that the useless servant who buried his talent in the sand was "delivered up to exterior darkness, where there was weeping and gnashing of teeth." Learn from

the Holy Spirit, who teaches in the book of Job that "man is born to labor," even as the bird is born to traverse the air with tireless wing.

II

But even if man were not born to labor, as we are told by the sacred writers he was; yet is he bound to submit himself to the necessity of it as a penalty of sin. This we learn from the account of the Almighty's dealings with our first parents in Paradise.

Pay attention, dearly beloved, to the trial of the fallen founder of our race, and to the sentence imposed on him as the penalty of his sin. "Because," said God to Adam, "thou hast harkened to the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat, cursed is the earth in thy work. With labor and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the earth out of which thou wast taken; for, dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return." (Gen. III, 17–19.)

St. Thomas, in explaining these words, says that they contain a commandment which obliges all men to some honest labor of body or mind. Do not imagine, therefore, that that famous sentence, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread all the days of thy life," was meant only for laboring men and poor mechanics. It was meant for all the children of Adam, and it regards us all. Give me one who is not a sinner. Give me one who is not of the sinful stock of Adam; we can dispense him from the penalty of labor; but since all have

sinned, no one can be dispensed from labor, which is the penalty of sin.

You have sinned, my dear brother; alas, how often! You know it. You must then do penance by "gaining your bread in the sweat of your face." And for how long? "Till you return to the earth out of which you were taken."

You are a sinner, my dear sister. How many faults have you not committed, and perhaps made others commit by your levity and scandalous conduct? You must groan before God with David and beg pardon of Him, laying before Him the humiliation of your heart and the labor of your hands. You have sinned, young men, and have unhappily lost your baptismal innocence. To what excesses has not the indulgence of your passions led you? You know it. It is to you in an especial manner, therefore, that the prophet addresses these words applicable to all according to the custom of the times in which he lived. "Turn the mill and grind corn; bare your shoulder" to the work. Yes, turn the mill and grind the corn that is to make your daily bread. Gird your loins for the work. Punish your rebellious flesh. Accustom your body to suffering. Bare your shoulder, and carry the yoke of labor, that the God of mercy may have compassion on you, and grant you the pardon of your sins.

III

But let me go on to say that, as Christians, we are bound to labor; since in this quality we ought to imitate Jesus Christ, our Head. He was "inured to labor from His youth," as the prophet had foretold of Him.

The Fathers of the Church relate that He lived for many years by the labor of His hands in the workshop of Joseph. When He came out of this painful and humiliating state, what fatigues did He not undergo traveling through the cities and hamlets of Judea to announce the Gospel? If He called Apostles to His company He willed that they be hardy workmen, capable of fatigue and labor, men capable of going to the ends of the earth in the work of the Apostolate, and of being an example to others in the way that conducts to Heaven. He commands them to preach to all those who should believe in Him that the Christian life is one of suffering and mortification. We read in Scripture that St. Paul, occupied as he was in preaching the Gospel, ceased not to practise manual labor. Nor could he suffer that there be idlers among Christians. "We entreat you, brethren," he says to the Thessalonians, "that you do your business, and work with your own hands, as we commanded you." And this precept he urges more forcibly still on the same people in the same letter, saying that "if any man will not work, neither let him eat."

Thus we see that to work becomes a Gospel precept and obliges by a new and holier title all those who profess the religion of Jesus Christ.

Learn, therefore, dearly beloved, the dignity of labor and the honor due to the workman, no matter in what condition of life Providence has placed him. Be zealous in the discharge of those duties your state calls on you to fulfill. If Providence has placed you in a state that dispenses you from the necessity of earning your bread; labor for others; labor for the poor; labor for the sick and miserable; labor for the instruction of

youth; labor for the sanctification of souls; labor for the glory of God. Subject yourselves to work in the spirit of submission to the will of God who ordains labor as our lot in life, whether as men, as penitents, or as Christians; that from natural works they become supernatural ones and merit for you the blessings of eternal rest.

HOPE

"I say to you, there shall be joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance."—(Luke XV, 10.)

1. This is one of the most remarkable among the many remarkable sayings of our blessed Lord. Who could believe it, if the Saviour Himself had not apprised us of it, that the conversion of sinners procures to all Heaven a particular joy? What can be the cause of a joy so surprising? Has God any need of us—of our sanctification, and can we contribute in any way to His happiness and that of His angels and saints?

O my brethren, the reason is that this God of goodness and mercy loves us. He loves us whom He created to His own image and likeness, and who were redeemed with the Blood of His only Son. He loves us, and as a consequence He desires our happiness. He looks upon our loss as a great evil, and on our conversion as so great a good that, when it is brought about, He wishes that all Heaven should sympathize with Him and rejoice in what He regards as the conquest of His love.

This goodness of our Heavenly Father towards us, as manifested in the Gospel, suggests to me to address you to-day on the theological virtue of hope—on that hope which is the strength of the Christian soul, and which brings us peace and consolation in our trials, even

as the rays of the rising sun as they sparkle over the deep bring joy to the weary seafarer buffeted by waves and storms.

And, first of all, I shall define my subject. What is hope? Hope is a gift of God, a divine virtue by which we expect, with a perfect confidence, eternal life and the means conducive to its attainment, together with all other necessary natural and supernatural goods.

It is a gift of God, for no one can have within him that blessed confidence which hope inspires unless it come down from the "Father of Lights," who confers His gifts on whom He wills.

It is a divine virtue, and as such distinct from that presumptuous confidence which emboldens sinners in their sins and leads them blindfolded to their ruin. Such confidence can be begotten only of hell. Hope is a supernatural beatitude which acts as our stay amid the trials of life; and, hence, it is called by St. Paul "the anchor of the soul." For just as the anchor holds a ship that it may not be carried away by storms; so hope renders the soul invulnerable amidst the dangers and temptations of the present life.

2. Divine hope is founded, in the first place, on the power of God. When we place our hope in the Lord, in whom do we place it? Is it not in the Almighty?—in Him who by His will has drawn all things out of nothingness, and who could with the same facility create a thousand other worlds more vast and beautiful than this—in Him whose power is without bounds?

It is not thus with men. However well disposed they may be towards us, their power to do good is often wanting. They themselves stand in need of many things. And no matter how much they may help us during life,

death will at last render all human assistance without avail.

The power of men is, moreover, limited to the goods of nature or fortune. As to the goods of grace, they of themselves have no jurisdiction over them. Hence, the Holy Ghost pronounces a malediction on those, who rely in their necessities on human power alone. "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart is departed from the Lord. For he shall be like the stunted shrub of the desert. He shall not see when good shall come, but he shall dwell in dryness, even as those plants that grow in the salt and uninhabited wilderness."

But the power of God is infinite! It presides over all things—over the goods of eternity as well as over those of time—over spiritual goods as well as over temporal ones. He alone can confer upon us all sorts of goods, and preserve us, or, rather, deliver us, from all sorts of evils.

This power of God is shown signally in that He employs the smallest things, the feeblest instruments, to produce the most prodigious effects. Does He wish to deliver the Jews from the galling slavery of Egypt? He employs for this purpose a shepherd who had spent half his life in the desert. Does He wish to humble the pride of Pharao? He sends amongst his people minute insects, and by their means works desolation in that powerful kingdom. Does He wish to scatter to the winds the formidable army of Nabuchodonosor, who made the whole East tremble, and who threatened to lay waste Judea with fire and sword? He employs the weak hand of a woman, who cuts off the head of Holophernes, the general of his army, and thus sends his troops fugitives among the hills. Does He wish to change the face of

the earth—to institute a religion which is opposed to all the prejudices of men; to all their passions; to all their false religions; to all the customs and maxims established in the world from time immemorial? He employs for the accomplishment of this great work twelve poor fishermen, without riches, or learning, or credit; without any human assistance. What prodigious effects of the power of God do we not witness every day, produced by the smallest causes?

3. God is, then, almighty to do us good. He is, moreover, infinitely good to employ His power in our favor; and this is the second ground of our hope.

Often when men have it in their power to help us, they do not wish to do so. How many cares and procedures must be taken in order to procure the interest of those in power? And even then, if one does the least thing to displease them, they are changed into the bitterest enemies. How dearly do not those who are in a position of influence sell the little favors they give us, and what services do they not afterwards exact in return?

The Lord does not act thus. He asks only to be allowed to do good, and to distribute His favors generously. The services He demands in return are very moderate indeed. He is content with our good will when we cannot give Him more. This goodness of God extends to all times and places, and to all sorts of persons. Nay, what is surprising, He pours out His graces on sinners even at the time that they offend Him with the greatest insolence. He causes His sun to shine on the impious as well as on the just. He causes His rain to fall on the lands of the greatest criminals as well as on those of His most faithful servants. He protects and nourishes

the ones as well as the others. He awaits with invincible patience the conversion of the wicked throughout a long course of years. Could we receive a more noble assurance of His generous dealings with sinners than that to be derived from the parable of the prodigal son?

You all know, my brethren, that famous history—the selfishness and ingratitude, the utter worthlessness of that young man, his unworthy conduct toward his aged father, the licentious life he led in the far-off country to which the desire to indulge his passions led him. When brought to the extremity of want and misery, the result of his riotous living, he recalls his former happiness and dignity, and hence, resolves to return. You remember how that good father, anxiously looking out for the return of his lost son, espies him far away on the horizon, recognizes him notwithstanding his tattered garments and haggard appearance, hobbles along eagerly to meet him, throws himself passionately on his neck and kisses him, restores to him the insignia of his former dignity, and invites his friends to rejoice with him, because, forsooth, his "son that was lost has been found; he that was dead has returned to life again."

Behold a striking representation of what the Father of mercies does when the sinner returns to Him by penance. He receives Him with love and tenderness, forgives him all his faults, and places him in the same state he was in before his fall.

4. We have a third motive of hope which is no less pressing than the other two; and it is, in the first place, the magnificent promises that God has given us to make us feel the effects of His power and goodness; and, secondly, the fulfilment of part of these promises—a fulfilment which is a sure pledge that all the others will

infallibly have their effect, if we place no obstacle in the way of their accomplishment.

Hear with joy and gratitude some of these promises. "Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee." "Behold I have graven thee in My hands," "I will carry you in My arms," He says again, "I will press you to My heart. I will never abandon you." "Consider the birds of the air," says our Lord, "they sow not, neither do they reap nor gather into barns; and yet they are in want of nothing." "Behold the lilies of the field," those wild anemones scattered all around, "they work not, neither do they spin, nor weave fabrics for themselves; and, yet, I say to you, not even Solomon in all his glory was clothed as one of these." "If, then, Divine Providence," He adds, "has such a care over the smallest animal; if God clothes so magnificently the grass of the valleys, which to-day is, and to-morrow will make a fire for the oven, how could He abandon you?" "Trust in Me," He says elsewhere, "and fear not that I will leave you in want." "Be not solicitous, saying what shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed; for, after all these things do the heathens seek. For, your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things. Seek ye, therefore, the Kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added to you."

Holy Scripture is full of similar promises—promises of temporal goods, promises of spiritual ones, promises in regard to grace and sanctifiction, promises repeated many times, and even confirmed on oath, in order to take from us the least vestige of diffidence.

5. But we have not only promises; we also have ef-

fects. What has not our good God done for us in the past? How many graces and favors has He not conferred on us? Consider the Sacraments which He has instituted, and which are always at hand for us; the pastors He has given to watch over us; the confessors with power to forgive us when we have fallen. Is it not for us that were instituted all the great means of salvation which compose the treasury of the Church, the merits of Jesus Christ and His saints, the indulgences and public prayers, and so many other helps?

And, for our temporal needs, does not God employ every day His Almighty arm to succor us? The heavenly bodies, do they not give us light and warmth; the earth, does it not furnish us with all sorts of nourishment; animals, plants, air, fire, water, do they not all contribute to our comfort, so as to leave us in want of nothing?

Open your eyes; look around you on all sides; contemplate the heavens and the earth, and you shall see the effects of the boundless liberality towards us of our God.

After so many proofs of the bounty of the Almighty, can we still be wanting in hope in Him? Shall we not throw ourselves without reserve into the arms of so loving and tender a Providence? Filled with confidence in His goodness and power; relying, with absolute trust, in His promises; shall we not cry out with holy David, in the midst of the trials that God permitted to befall him, "Even wert Thou to kill me, Lord, still will I hope in Thee;" and again, "Were I in the shadow of death, still I will not fear, because Thou, my God, dost watch over me."

THE SANCTIFICATION OF SUNDAY. I

"Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath Day."—(Exod. XX, 1.)

I

The Sunday Rest

1. Although God by His immensity fills the whole universe with His presence, yet He has wished to reserve to Himself churches wherein He demands in a special manner our homage. And so, in like manner, although He fills all time by His eternity, yet He has marked out certain days which should be specially consecrated to Him, and those days He wishes should be sanctified by devoting them to works of piety and religion.

It is true that we owe to God all the moments of our lives, and that all the days of a Christian ought to be days sanctified by holy practices, and one might imagine that it would be a slight advantage to learn solely to sanctify certain days scattered over a life which ought to be all holy. But no, my brethren, the sanctification of those days of benediction cannot fail to have an influence upon all the days of our life; and whoever will make it a rule for himself to keep holy the Lord's day, will in a short time acquire the happy talent of sanctifying all the others also.

This day, dearly beloved, which you celebrate in a spirit of submission to the commandment of God—this day which has suspended your labor, and brought you together in church, has been sanctified from the beginning of the world; and the Almighty had no sooner regulated the course of the stars than He set Himself to regulate its observance and destiny. He gave sanction to the law of the Sabbath by His own conduct, since, after having given us during the six days of Creation the example of labor to which He subjects us, on the seventh He gave us the example of repose which He commands.

2. Now the commandment of suspending our works on Sunday might perhaps appear to some childish and superstitious, and one might ask, what has the movement of our hands to do with the Almighty? Can He be offended at a thing so indifferent—often, indeed, so praiseworthy, as labor? Yes, undoubtedly He can, my brethren; He can be offended; since He regards it on this day as a crime worthy of death. This the old law makes known to us expressly. "Whoever," says the command of God, in the Book of Exodus, "Whoever shall violate the rest of the Sabbath day; let him die the death" (Ex. XXXI, 14), and conformably to this law a man was stoned, even by the particular judgment of God Himself, for having been surprised during this day in an occupation which could appear not only permissible, but necessary. Now, could God declare Himself more emphatically in favor of this law than in putting it in the balance with a human life and judging that it ought to outweigh?

3. But the Almighty rests not here, and that He may authorize this law He does something more as-

tonishing. During the time that He fed His people in the desert, whereas He sent them on week days a certain quantity of manna exactly proportioned to the wants of each individual, the quantity was found doubled on the eve of the Sabbath—and this He did in order that the people, provided with all that was necessary for the day following, might not have occasion for even bending their body or stretching their hand to gather the present from Heaven. Thus, on the day that preceded the Sabbath a miracle reminded the Jews to what a degree the Lord was jealous of the observance of His law, and how He reprobated a labor of which He judged proper to take from them even the least pretense, by a multitude of prodigies.

4. If you ask, why punishments so severe and precautions so wonderful?—I reply that there is always a great distinction to be made between the law itself and the thing commanded or forbidden by that law. The thing commanded may in itself appear trivial and indifferent; but the law is never so. What was in the object that called for the prohibition made to Adam to eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge? Nothing. But it became great and considerable by the commandment, because the commandment was formal; because it came from a Master who ought to be obeyed. I say the same thing of a thousand other laws, and in particular of that which forbids labor on the day consecrated to God. The thing forbidden may appear slight, but it becomes great by its prohibition, since the law that prohibits it in some sort comprises in itself all the greatness and all the authority of Him who imposed it, and by consequence makes a crime of the disobedience which contradicts it. "Remember, then,

that thou keep holy the Sabbath day," and sanctify it, in the first place, by resting from all servile works.

II

Spiritual Activity

1. But if God forbids servile works on Sundays, He by no means condemns you during this day to an idle and unprofitable repose. Our rest ought to be modeled on that of God Himself.

When God rests from His great works, He is not idle; He remains not in indolent inaction. If He ceases to operate externally, He is taken up with interior occupations that concern the welfare of the universe. He continually revolves His designs of mercy and justice. He marks out the destiny of the just and the wicked. He prepares graces for all men. He designs crowns for the elect; salutary chastisements for sinners; desperate punishments for the impenitent. The rest of the Lord is then a laborious rest, and as different from idleness as even labor itself.

It is a like rest that God demands of us. He forbids us labor of the body, only that we may occupy ourselves with that of the soul. Such a rest, I say, is not idleness. It is not idleness to give one's self up to converse with God. It is not a small occupation to contemplate the greatness of the Almighty. What an object, my brethren, to explore, to meditate upon! Here relations vast and varied offer themselves to our gaze. Here is an untiring source of reflection and sentiment. God is a Creator whom we ought to adore. He is a Master whom we are bound to serve. He is a

Father whom it is bliss to love. He is a judge whom we must hear. He offers us grace which we must ask. He proffers us crowns which we are to merit. He gives us laws which it is our duty to obey. He makes threats which we ought to fear. He sends us chastisements which we ought to profit by. If we contemplate the mysteries of His greatness, we shall be humbled by them; the marvels of His power, they will astonish us; the resources of His providence, we shall be struck by them; the strokes of His justice, they will fill us with terror; the effects of His justice, of His mercy, of His goodness, we shall be touched by them.

Fear, love, respect, and admiration of the divine perfections ought to fill up all the moments of that mysterious rest of the Sunday, which is, to speak properly, only the repose of the body, but which ought to be looked upon rather as the true occupation of the soul.

2. Is it thus that you fill in the Sunday, my brethren? Alas, there is not, perhaps, a day in your life in which you are more idle or more vainly occupied than during the day consecrated to the Lord. Gross and sensual like the Jews, we think we have done much for God by suspending labors painful in themselves, and which we perhaps detest. And by what occupation will they be replaced—those works the sacrifice of which costs us so little? They will be replaced by dull and tedious conversations, in which many say things that should never have been thought of. They will be replaced by idle visits and amusements, in which God or things that have relation to Him are scarcely thought of, perhaps not even tolerated.

And would to God, they had contented themselves with even spending this day in idleness; but delivered

once to this mother of all evil, do they content themselves with rendering the Lord's day sterile of virtue? Do they not, on the contrary, render it fruitful of libertinism and sin? The passions trodden underfoot on weekdays by labor, wake up to fresh strength during the idleness of Sunday; so that this day, instead of being sanctified by holy duties, becomes for many a day of profanation and of scandal. One scruples to work on a Sunday, yet he thinks nothing of spending the day in gambling and debauchery. Another, who carries himself respectably during the week days, is not ashamed to spend the Sunday evening in the saloon, and to be seen publicly drunk on the streets, cursing and quarreling with his neighbors and family.

It is on those days particularly that young men and women keep unlawful company, give loose reins to their passions, and deliver themselves up to all the works of lust and crime. Thus it is that the Lord's day becomes for them a day of sin, a day devoted to revelling and hellish orgies.

3. I will ask you, dearly beloved, to redouble your efforts to propitiate God for the injuries done Him, especially on Sundays, by such crimes and shameful excesses. And for yourselves, try to carry out the ordination of God, so that this day be devoted by you in accordance with His will to works of piety and religion; that thus you may sanctify your own lives, edify your neighbor, bring blessings on the Church, and glorify and thank the Almighty Giver of all good gifts for His blessings, and merit a continuance of them, even the crowning grace of final perseverance.

THE SANCTIFICATION OF SUNDAY. II

"And it came to pass, when Jesus went into the house of one of the chiefs of the Pharisees on the Sabbath day to eat bread, that they watched Him. And behold, there was a certain man before him that had the dropsy. And Jesus answering, spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying: 'Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?' But they held their peace. But He, taking him, healed him, and sent him away. And answering them, He said: 'Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fall into a pit, and will not immediately draw him out on the Sabbath day?' And they could not answer Him to these things."—(Luke XIV, 1–6.)

It is easy to see that the scruples of the Pharisees concerning the cure of this poor dropsical man on the Sabbath day were unfounded. For God, in forbidding servile works on the Sabbath, did not intend to forbid works of charity. On the contrary, the performing of works of charity makes part of the sanctification of this day; and it was only by a gross abuse that a good part of the Jews were content to pass the day in idleness and pleasure.

Nevertheless, the question of our Lord may be made useful to us, if only it stimulate us to reflect on the things that concern the sanctification of the Christian Sunday.

To this effect, and as a commentary on the Gospel I have read for you, I purpose to devote my discourse to-day to this important subject.

And, first, let me premise by calling your attention to a surmise among the learned that seems to be well founded; it is that the precept commanding the sanctification of the Sabbath day comes down by primeval tradition from the creation of the world. One reason among others for this surmise is the fact that among the ruins of the ancient cities of Assyria and Chaldea two sets of tablets, that is to say, two books written on baked clay, and going back in their originals to a time anterior to the giving of the law on Mount Sinai by 500 years, have been recovered, in which a reference to a seventh-day religious observance among those ancient Semitic people seems to be indicated. Now this can point to nothing else than a tradition coming down through Noe from the antediluvian patriarchs and Adam—a tradition indicating that from the creation God demanded from man that one day in seven be devoted to his service and worship. The very words of the commandment prescribing the sanctification of the Sabbath day confirm this surmise. For unlike all the other commandments, it commences with the important injunction, "remember—" as if to indicate that it was already a recognized ordination, but that there was danger of its falling into desuetude; and the word Sabbath is used without introduction or explanation of any kind, as of a long-established and well-known institution.

Let me further say, what is not generally recognized, that our Sunday does not in all respects respond to the Jewish Sabbath. The one was of divine institution, being part of the ceremonial law of the Jews, and as such was allowed to fall into desuetude by the Apostles; the other is of ecclesiastical origin, being

made a general precept of the Church not many centuries after the founding of Christianity.

But although the precept concerning the Sunday's observance be of ecclesiastical institution; and though the secondary motive of the precept be different from that of the Jewish one; yet it may be looked upon as a substitute for the latter, and as, in a general way, modeled on it.

I

Servile Works Forbidden

1. This being stated, I say that there are three things that prevent the due celebration of the Sunday: First, servile works, which go against the letter of the precept commanding the Sunday rest; second, sinful works, which go against its spirit, which forbids libertinage on this day; and third, idleness and excessive diversion, which go against its end, which is, that the day be spent in works of piety and religion.

I say, then, that servile works prevent the due celebration of the Sunday.

Taking the precept in its literal sense, we find that it obliges us before all things to cease from our accustomed works, particularly those that are called servile.

The law is formal. "Thou shalt do no servile work on that day." And in order that we might know more distinctly what are servile works, here is how the precept is enjoined in Scripture: "Six days of the week you shall do all your works; but the seventh, which is the day of rest consecrated to the Lord your God, you

shall not work; neither you, nor your sons, nor your daughters, nor your servant man, nor your maid, nor the animal that belongs to you, nor the stranger that is within your gates." And He gives the reason: "Because the Lord in six days did all His works, and He rested on the seventh; and it is for this reason that He blessed this day, and commanded you to sanctify it."

Never was law couched in clearer terms, and never did lawgiver give a better reason for its institution. And that reason is that, as by laboring during six days of the week we imitate the conduct of the Almighty who created the universe in six days; so also, we follow His example by resting on the seventh. And His wish is that, between the Sabbath of the Lord on which he rested from His works, and the eternal Sabbath of Heaven, there be a temporal Sabbath formed on the idea of the one and the other.

2. A second reason for the law of the Sabbath rest is given in the book of Deuteronomy; and it is in order to keep forever in the minds of the Jews the remembrance of their deliverance from the slavery of Egypt. And in order that the memory of that great event might never be forgotten by them, the Almighty commanded, not only the solemn celebration of the Pasch to be held every year, and the prodigy to be inscribed in the annals of their nation; but also the solemn celebration of the Sabbath day by the whole Jewish people.

This reason has been supplanted in Christian times by another and greater one, namely, to commemorate the deliverance of the whole human race from the slavery of the devil, of which the Lord's Resurrection from the dead, which took place on this day, is at once the type and the assurance.

3. The Lord and His Church have commanded, dearly beloved. It is our duty to obey. And it is not permitted to anyone, without a grave reason, to dispense himself from the precept. For if it was forbidden to the Jews to do any servile work on the Sabbath day, that they might solemnize in peace the festival of their deliverance; what obligation have not we, Christians, to abstain from those works, to honor the Sunday, which is the commemoration of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ and of our Redemption.

Let us deplore the impiety of those Christians amongst us, and they are not a few, who scandalously and audaciously violate this venerable ordinance, and who are not ashamed in the presence of pagans and unbelievers to be seen working publicly and unnecessarily on Sundays. These are in a pre-eminent way scandal-givers, and as such they deserve the indignation and contempt of the whole people whose religious sentiments they outrage. For ourselves, dearly beloved, let us take care to hold in honor this venerable precept by abstaining scrupulously from all unnecessary servile works, and God will bless and make fruitful our labors. He will, moreover, sanctify our lives and enrich us with the goods of eternity.

II

Sinful Works Forbidden

1. But it is not enough that we abstain from servile works on Sundays. We must abstain also from sinful ones, which are even more offensive to God.

If we are to believe St. Augustine, one of the gross-

est illusions of the Jews was to content themselves with keeping the law according to the letter, which, as Scripture says, "killeth"; and to give themselves little trouble to observe it according to the spirit, "which giveth life." Attached to the carnal Sabbath, on which corporal works should cease, they neglected the spiritual one, in accordance with which works of sin were forbidden them; and many availed themselves of the Sabbath day as a time to give themselves up to unlawful pleasures.

This, I say, was a gross illusion; for if servile works are unlawful on the Sabbath day, how much more are not sinful works? And this for two reasons: First, because sinful works are servile works, according to our Lord, who says that "he who committeth sin, is the slave of sin." And who shall say if servile works, which otherwise are innocent and to be commended, interfere with the sanctity of the Sabbath day; that sinful works, which are intrinsically evil, do not? And secondly, because sinful works committed on this day are a profanation and a sacrilege, since they dishonor a time specially consecrated to the solemn worship of God. Can we, brethren, clear ourselves from the reproach of a like disorder?

Far be it from me to make a general charge of impiety against a religious people. Rather would I say, in the words of St. Paul to the early Christians of Rome: "Your piety is known to all men."

But yet, we know, and cannot deny, that there are many among us who profane the Sunday by the commission of sin. How often, for instance, when passing along our streets on a Sunday evening, do we not come across that wild beast in human form, the drunken

man? Yes, men are to be found who would be offended if they were not looked upon and treated as good Catholics, and yet think nothing of getting drunk on Sunday and of spending their week's earnings in extravagance and debauchery; thus offending God grievously, and often reducing their families to a state of destitution. Are not these profaners of the Sunday; and do they not bring the Lord's day into derision by their profanity and debauchery?

2. Another practice that profanes the Sunday is that of young men and women holding dangerous intercourse on Sunday evenings. Now, I have spoken on other occasions of the practice of company-keeping, and denounced it as one of the most fruitful sources of sin that we are acquainted with, as a practice that works havoc with the virtue of thousands of our young people of both sexes. So fatal to virtue is the habit of company-keeping that those who are addicted to it are generally suspected of immoral practices; and with good reason, considering the strong tendencies to impure indulgence inherent in us all; a tendency that we control only by taking the greatest precaution, and with the help of God obtained through prayer. What, then, are we to think of those who wilfully frequent the occasion, where without a miracle from God they can not remain unscathed, and where the very act itself of company-keeping is often a mortal sin against chastity? As to the time, let me only say that the passions kept under restraint by worldly concerns during the week, like trampled weeds, spring up afresh on Sundays by reason of the leisure given.

I appeal then to you, parents and heads of families, to see that you faithfully discharge your duty of

watching over the conduct of those under your charge, and see that they be not allowed to take up with dangerous companions, when they go for their recreation on Sunday and other evenings.

III

Idleness and Excessive Diversion Forbidden

There is a third practice which, though it be lawful and innocent when indulged in in moderation, has become a real abuse by over-indulgence; it is that of spending the greater part of the Sunday in sports and long excursions, to the complete disregard of the end for which the Sunday was instituted. Now (and I want it to be well understood; for the Church in her efforts for the Sunday's observance is guided by no narrow Puritanical spirit), the law of the Church does not forbid a moderate diversion on Sundays; particularly to those who are hard-worked on the other days of the week, and who have only the Sunday for enjoyment in the company of their friends. But this is the evil of which I speak: that many are so taken up with their sports and pleasure parties that they scarcely think of performing a single act of prayer or piety on the day consecrated to the worship of God. Nay, what is more to be deplored is, that many, and those I fear are a growing number, do not hesitate to sacrifice attendance at the Sunday Mass commanded them by the Church, rather than forego their wonted pastime.

Dear brethren, let me remind you that the end of the Sunday rest is not diversion, however innocent it may be in itself. It is rather to give leisure for the more

assiduous worship of God and more serious attention to the soul's needs. And a hurling match, or a football match, or a picnic, or an auto ride, or other amusement that takes up the whole day, defeats the end of the commandment, which is that we keep holy the Sunday.

IV

The Sunday Horarium

How then, you will ask, are you to spend the day in a manner pleasing to God and worthy of a Christian people?

Well, here is a general summary of the acts that, as a rule, should fill the day, as recommended by the saints and practised by devout Catholics in all countries and ages.

1. At rising let your first duty be to kneel down and say your morning prayers devoutly; taking care to thank God for the benefits of the past week, and to offer Him the fruits of the one that has commenced.

2. Prepare to attend devoutly at Mass, as commanded by the Church, and, if possible, to receive Holy Communion. If you can make a choice, assist at one at which you will hear the word of God propounded to you.

3. During the day, spend some time in pious reading with your friends, and in the recitation of some special prayers, to which you will accustom yourself on those days of greater leisure.

4. Practise some work of mercy, such as the visiting of the sick, or the instruction of the ignorant in religious knowledge.

5. At evening be present at the devotions in some church, that you may receive the holy Benediction of our Lord, and strength for the labors and trials of the week to come.

6. At night before retiring, say your accustomed prayers, especially the Rosary in company with the other members of your family.

With all these exercises of piety there will be still long hours for leisure and amusement. By their practice you will procure for yourself real happiness, the blessing of God during life, and treasures of merit hereafter, to be laid up for you in the eternal Sabbath, where you will rest in the bosom of your God in unending peace and glory.

RESPECT DUE TO HOLY PLACES

"It is written: My house shall be called a house of prayer; but you have made it a den of thieves."—(Matt. XXI, 13.)

I

"The House of God"

1. Great indeed was the profanation of the Temple of Jerusalem when beasts, and money changers, and buyers and sellers, crowded its marble courts and the voice and bustle of worldly traffic rang through its halls, consecrated to prayer and sacrifice. And scandalous the conduct of those whose criminal laxity turned the house of the living God into a mart of shameless and sordid commerce. And it is little wonder that our Blessed Lord, fired with a holy zeal for the purity of religious worship, should thus scourge the profaners of the holy place, and drive them from the place they were unworthy to occupy within its sacred enclosure.

But whilst we reprobate the irregularities of those whose conduct seems so inexcusable, and whilst we sympathize with our Lord in His fearless zeal for the honor of the temple; it is good for us to reflect on our own duty in regard to our churches, and to consider whether we pay to them the respect that is their due.

I propose, therefore, dear brethren, to address you to-day on the important subject of the respect that we owe to them.

2. That the greatest respect is due to our churches can be proved by many arguments; but I confine myself to-day to saying that they demand our greatest reverence, if only for one or two reasons, and first, because, in the words of our Lord, "they are the house of God."

It is true that God is everywhere; He fills all space by His immensity, even as He fills all time by His eternity. He is in hell with the damned, to make them feel the rigors of His justice; just as He is in Heaven with His elect to crown their victories. He is present everywhere, as the theologians say, by His essence, and by His presence, and by His power. "If I ascend into heaven," says the Psalmist, "Thou art there; if I descend into hell, Thou art there; if I take my wings in the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, is it not Thy hand that shall guide me thither, and Thy right hand shall hold me?"

But though the Lord be everywhere and though He fills all space by His immensity; yet He has chosen certain places as the theatres in which to work His greatest wonders and to show forth the most admirable effects of His benign will. Amongst those may be reckoned our churches. In those He has chosen to take up His abode. In them He lives as in His own palace. He has erected His court in them no less truly than in the abode of His glory, and they are in truth "Houses of God."

In this earthly abode of the King of kings, everything proclaims His greatness and His majesty, no less

clearly than His meekness and His love. The cross is His standard. The tabernacle is His council chamber. The ministers of His church are His officers. The faithful are His courtiers. The tribunals of penance serve as His seat of justice. The pulpit of truth is the place where He pronounces His commands and where He intimates to us His will; and all there announce His greatness and His presence.

3. Recall to mind, dear brethren, the reverential awe the presence of the Lord inspired in His servants in the Old Law, whether that presence was manifested by personal apparition, or whether He employed to this effect the ministry of angels.

The Book of Genesis records that, as soon as our Father, Adam, heard the voice of God in the Garden of Paradise, he was stricken with a mighty fear, and not knowing what to do, hid himself among the trees, as if he did not know that we cannot conceal ourselves from Him who penetrates to the depths of consciences the most obscure, and who unfolds the windings of the most crooked heart.

Again, Abraham, seeing three angels who represented, according to the opinion of interpreters of Scripture, the adorable Persons of the Holy Trinity, prostrated himself before them and was seized with a holy fear. Jacob testified none the less his reverence when he perceived that mystic ladder by which the angels pass continually to execute the orders of their Master. For he cried out in a transport of astonishment: "Truly, this is a holy place, and I knew it not"; and lest his descendants in after years become unmindful of the spot sanctified by the divine apparition, he raised thereon a pillar and consecrated it by the unc-

tion of oil, that it might serve as a monument to all after ages. And Moses, although he enjoyed a familiarity with God which had been accorded to no other man, yet ceased not to be filled with fear every time he spoke to Him; and when he received the tables of the Law on Mount Sinai, how many preparations, and prayers, and fasts, did he not order before approaching the awful place where God manifested His power. It was forbidden to all others, under penalty of death, to approach the holy mountain; and in order that they might be mere spectators from afar of what took place, they were obliged to prepare themselves with care, and to purify themselves, and even to wash their garments. And, yet, it is said in the Acts of the Apostles that it was only through the ministry of angels that the Law was given.

How many like examples have we not in Scripture of the profound reverence which the majesty of the Lord's presence inspired, and of the terror of those who were witnesses of it? So great was this fear that it came to be a proverb among the Jews, that it was impossible to see the Lord and live.

What ought, then, to be our fear and reverence, dearly beloved, when we are in the sanctuaries of the New Law? There is no question here of figures or passing representations, but of God's abiding presence. God does not manifest Himself to us by angels, or through the agency of some extraordinary signs. He is in our churches as truly as in the abode of His glory. He is here by a special presence, and not merely as He is in other places. He makes felt in our churches the most particular effects of His power; and the sole difference between our sanctuaries and Heaven is, that there He manifests Himself clearly in His Essence, whereas here

He manifests Himself to us only under the shadows of faith. Jesus resides here Personally. His holy Humanity is here, together with His Divinity. He is here with the same Body that He assumed for us at the Incarnation, and with the same Blood that was shed for us upon the cross.

Should we not, therefore, whenever we enter into our churches, be filled with awe at the presence of the Divine Majesty that dwells unseen upon our altars? Should we not cry out with Jacob: "Yes, the Lord is truly here. This place is terrible. It is the house of God, and the gate of Heaven."

II

The House of Prayer

1. Two other reasons why we should have a great veneration for our churches are—that they are places set apart for prayer, and because of the marvels that are worked in them.

If our Blessed Lord said of the Temple of Jerusalem, which after all was only a figure of the temples of the New Law, that it was a house of prayer, with how much greater reason does not this honorable title of houses of prayer belong to them? This motive appears so much the more pressing as our Saviour made use of it alone when He expelled from the Temple the impious men who profaned it. "Get ye hence," He said to them. "Know you not that this house is a house of prayer; and you have made of it a den of thieves."

I know that we can pray everywhere; that God hears the voice of those who address Him wherever they may

be; that He hears the groans of His servants from the depths of dungeons, as well as from the height of thrones; from the most savage deserts, not less than from the most numerous assemblies of piety. I know that He heard the groans of Job upon his dunghill, and the prayer of the youths in the fiery furnace of Babylon; that He heard Jonas from out the whale's belly, and Manasses in chains; that He heard Jeremias from the bottom of the cistern into which he was cast; and Daniel from the lions' den. But it is true also that He has destined from all time certain places where He wishes that the peoples should offer Him their vows, and where He accords with greater facility the graces which they ask. The saints of all ages were well convinced of this truth when they showed themselves so assiduous by their presence in places consecrated to public prayer. The early Christians feared not the menaces of tyrants, nor the most cruel death, when there was question of their being present in the Catacombs, where the faithful were obliged by reason of persecutions, to celebrate the Divine Mysteries. And does not our Lord Himself confirm what I say by His example, when He goes so often into the Temple to pray?

And so our churches, being places set apart to offer our vows to God, to beg His favors and to sing His praises, with what reverence ought we to conduct ourselves in them, so as not to draw upon ourselves His judgments when we come to implore His mercy?

2. All nations have always had a great respect for the places consecrated to the gods whom they adored. I need not bring forward the example of the pagans of olden times, who, as the philosopher, Seneca, relates, entered into the temples of their idols only with a cer-

tain religious fear. They kept their heads uncovered, their eyes cast down. They went bare-footed, and observed all the other marks of a perfect modesty. It was strictly forbidden to speak in them, and in order that this prohibition be not ignored by anyone, it was written in large characters on the walls and on the outer doors of the edifices. Neither need I tell of the veneration of the Mohammedans for their mosques, or the Hindus and other idolatrous peoples for the places dedicated to their gods. The measure of the peoples' respect for their places of worship has always been looked upon as the measure of their piety.

See again how great was the veneration of the Israelites in the days of their fervor for the Tabernacle and afterwards for the Temple of Jerusalem. It was forbidden to the Gentiles to enter it, and this privilege was permitted only to the Jews. The priests and levites alone had the right to enter into the Sanctuary, and the High Priest, to the exclusion of all others, was allowed to enter, and that but once a year, into the Holy of Holies.

Death was the punishment of all those who observed not with the greatest exactness the rules which God Himself had been pleased to make on this subject; and yet, what was this Temple but a very imperfect figure of our churches?

There were offered there only the sacrifices of beasts, and all the ceremonies that were there observed with so great solemnity ended with practices purely exterior. Its most precious treasures were the Ark of the Covenant, the Table of the Law, and the Rod of Aaron.

Now, what comparison between all these and our Christian churches, where the Son of God is daily offered in sacrifice to His Father; where the Ark of the

New Covenant is enclosed, and where sins are forgiven through the sovereign power which the Saviour of the world has left to His Church, and where the work of Redemption is consummated in regard to each member of the Church in particular?

III

The Theatre of God's Wonders

1. But, lest I seem to labor overmuch this argument, let me ask you to consider the wonders that are worked in our churches, and this is the last motive that I will put before you to induce you to venerate them with your whole heart. Raise your eyes, then, and look around you. Does not everything here preach holiness? See that sacred font in which you were regenerated. It was there that you ceased to be the slaves of the devil and were made members of the mystical body of Jesus Christ. It was there that you were changed from darkness into light, and raised from death to life. Cast your eyes on those confessionals where you have received so many absolutions, where you promised so often to lead a holy life, and where pardon was granted you only on condition that you quitted your bad habits and became reformed. Look upon those altar rails where you tasted so often of the Gift of God, and where you partook of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. See this pulpit, from which you heard so many instructions, and where the preacher so often declaimed, I hope not without effect, against your vices. See this altar, where there was offered for your sins the Innocent Victim, but for which you would have felt long ago the vengeance of God.

Look upon the images of the saints, which reproach you for your laxity. O holy and amiable sojourn of the Saints! O places worthy of being frequented by the faithful! O haunts of holy souls; may we have always in our hearts the sentiments of the Psalmist, when he cried out in transport: "I have loved the beauty of Thy house, O Lord, and the place where Thy glory dwelleth."

THE DUTIES OF PARENTS. I

"There was a certain ruler whose son was sick at Capharnaum. He, having heard that Jesus was come from Judea into Galilee, went to Him, and prayed Him to come down and heal his son; for he was at the point of death," etc.— (*John IV, 46–53.*)

I

1. In the example of the ruler mentioned in this Gospel there is conveyed to us one of the most important lessons in all Scripture. This has regard to the care which parents and those in authority ought to have for their children and domestics.

This ruler was, according to St. Jerome, a counsellor, or petty prince, belonging to the court of King Herod of Galilee.

But unbeliever as he was, and busied with the details of his important office, he still had solicitude for his dear child lying at home sick unto death with a violent fever. And hearing of the wonders wrought by our Lord in favor of the sick and the distressed, he came to beg of Him the restoration of his son's health. Nor was he disheartened at the apparent rebuff of our Lord, but only besought Him the more earnestly, saying: "Lord, come down before my son die." And our Lord, seeing the goodness of his heart, and the earnestness of his petition, bade him go in peace, because his son was cured in that hour.

But not yet was there an end to the solicitude of this tender father. For, recognizing the Divinity of our Lord from His power of giving life and health, he not only believed in Him himself, but ceased not till by his entreaties and prayers he procured the conversion of his whole family and household.

Dearly beloved, what an example for us of zeal for the welfare of those dear to us, and for those under our charge! What an example to parents in particular in the discharge of the duties to which they are obliged towards their children—duties which they are found only too often remiss in fulfilling, and which will be one of the severest counts they shall have to answer for before the judgment seat of God.

2. I take occasion, therefore, from the incidents recorded in this Gospel to speak to you to-day, fathers and mothers, on one of the great duties of parents in regard to their children; namely, the duty of rearing them and providing for their temporal welfare.

This duty arises primarily out of God's method of governing the universe—of conducting creatures to their end through the agency of second causes. In the creation of beings God alone acts, because He alone is capable of acting, creation being an act of almighty power; but in the government of the universe it is His will to entrust to His creatures, according to their capabilities, a share of His universal providence. In this He acts as a king who rules his kingdom through the agency of provincial governors; or as a military commander who entrusts subordinate command to his inferior officers.

Now amongst the positions of responsibility given by God to creatures, that entrusted to parents is, whether

we consider the relations of children to Jesus Christ, the sublime end to which they are ordained, or the many helps they stand in need of for the attainment of that end, one of the most important. And it may be said that just as the parental prerogative is a participation in the Fatherhood of God; so, also, the duties consequent on that prerogative are a participation in His Divine Providence in regard to their children. In other words, parents are God's helpers in the work of their production and upbringing.

3. See, then, fathers and mothers, that you discharge your duties with fidelity towards your children. Know that your office is one that demands great generosity and watchfulness; nay, a generosity and watchfulness that must resemble in some sort those of God Himself. "I have brought up children," says He by His prophet.

And how are not His generosity and watchfulness shown in regard to us, His children? He daily provides us with food, lodging, raiment—everything, in fact, to minister to our happiness and well-being here below. What is this earth but a fruitful mother teeming with all kinds of riches to minister to our wants? All beings, animate and inanimate, are our servants. The great ocean bears our burdens to and from distant lands, and nourishes us with its teeming abundance. The heavenly bodies rejoice us with the light and warmth of their rays. Nay, even the tiniest star that twinkles in the remote heavens bears to us a message of God's watchfulness and providence over us.

And as to our soul's needs, see how the same generous and provident Parent watches over us. He provides for the spiritual life of our souls by divine grace and His holy word. Consider the many means of super-

natural help He has provided for us in the holy Catholic Church. The Sacraments, are they not so many channels of grace flowing to us from the inexhaustible source of the Sacred Heart?

Above all, in the mystery of the Eucharist does He not nourish us with His own precious Body and Blood? It is for this reason that He is compared in Scripture to the "pelican of the wilderness." "I am made like the pelican of the wilderness." Now the pelican of the wilderness was a bird much famed in Eastern story. And it was said of it that, when it perceived its little ones bitten by a snake, it tried to preserve their lives with its own blood, which it drew from its breast with great pecks of its beak.

Brethren, we, the offspring of the good God, were all bitten by the infernal serpent; and Jesus Christ, seeing no other means of reviving our dead souls, opens His own sacred breast, as you see, and re-animates us with His own life blood. Nor does the solicitude of this best of Fathers end here; for He every day nourishes our poor famished souls with the same sacred blood, which He communicates to us in the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

4. Dear parents, your generosity and spirit of sacrifice in favor of your children must resemble in some sort that of Jesus Christ. Nor are you in the fulfilment of this great duty to your children to look forward to a mere temporal reward. No, parents, "sursum corda"; lift up your hopes on high, and look forward to an eternal reward which God alone can give. Know that you are carrying out the great work that He has allotted to you in life; that you discharge the functions

of a God-given ministry here; and for this He Himself will be your reward.

When St. Thomas of Aquin had finished his immortal work, the "Summa Theologica," a pious legend has it that our Lord appeared to him and said: "Thou hast written well of Me, Thomas. What reward shall I give thee?" "None other than Thyself, O Lord," replied the saint; and this must be the constant hope and aspiration of the Christian parent, "None other than Thyself, O Lord."

Parents are but too apt to look forward to the prospect of a contented and happy old age in the midst of a prosperous and contented family, as the reward of a life of care and toil in the rearing of their children. Now, this reward will as a rule never come. Human nature is so selfish. The bonds of charity are so relaxed nowadays that gratitude to parents on the part of children might be said to be the exception rather than the rule. And then there are so many mishaps in life that, to the day of your death, dear fathers and mothers, your children will be a source of anxiety to you.

And even were your children to turn out all that you could desire, and were you surrounded in your old age with all the happiness that this world could give, this would be but a poor return for the troubles and anxieties of a lifetime. No, parents, I say again, lift up your hopes on high, and look forward to an eternal reward with God. Know that you are carrying out the great work allotted to you in life, and God himself will be your reward. This hope, and it alone, will enable you to triumph over the weaknesses of

nature, will sustain you amid the anxieties of your state and will enable you to win your crown of glory in the hereafter.

II

1. Now, when we consider parents as we usually find them, can we say that we see them discharge this great duty of rearing their children with fidelity?

Far be it from me to make a general charge. I am well aware of the generous, nay, often heroic sacrifices made by Catholic parents in the upbringing and the education of their children; but yet, I know that many fail in fulfilling this essential duty of their state; for, otherwise how explain the number of neglected children to be found amongst us?

How many neglected little ones are to be met with while their parents misapply the means that should preserve them in comfort? How many parents who squander the money God enabled them to earn instead of expending it economically for their support? How many lazy fathers who refuse to work when work may be had? How many idle, gossiping women who allow their children to grow up in ignorance, and seem less concerned for their welfare than for the commonest worldly matter? Far from resembling the pelican of the wilderness, as did our blessed Lord, they resemble rather the ostrich, another bird mentioned in Scripture as the type of callousness and hard-heartedness towards its young. And this is the complaint God Himself makes through the Prophet Jeremias: "The fierce monsters of the deep have put forth their dugs, they have suckled their young, but the daughter of my people is cruel as the ostrich of the desert."

Now, the ostrich is represented as an extremely gluttonous bird. Throw it lumps of iron or brass, it devours all, it digests all; but in regard to its young it is cruel to the last degree. For, as we are told in the Book of Job, unlike every other bird, when it lays its eggs, it "abandons them in the sand, without minding whether the foot may tread upon them or the wild ass may break them." If any of their little ones, brought to life by the heat of the sun, come to call their mother, "she is insensible to their call as if they were not hers."

Is not this what ill-natured fathers and mothers do? They devour, like the ostrich, the iron and the brass —the means of the family. For these they must sell or pawn to supply for their excesses and foolish expenses, whilst their poor children are in misery and perish of hunger. "They are hardened against their young, as if they were not theirs."

Cruel parents, you consider not that by thus neglecting your little ones you will be the occasion of their falling into crime. Your daughter will become a jade; your son will become a drunkard or a thief, and will bring disgrace and sorrow on your old age. "You consider not that the foot will trample on them and the wild ass will crush them."

2. And now, dearly beloved, the widespread prevalence in this country and in the present time of a most shocking and unnatural crime—one that cries to heaven for vengeance—compels me to speak on a matter that I should prefer to be silent about. A high authority has included the matter of which I speak with other practices under the heading of "race suicide"; though for myself, separating this special sin

from others named, which don't seem to belong to the same category, I prefer to call it "homicidal selfishness."

Call it what name you will, the thing itself has but one meaning—murder. Yes, it is murder; but it is murder of a most shocking and unnatural character.

Dearly beloved, in all times and among even the most barbarous peoples the crime of parricide has been looked on as of a most atrocious nature. For it means, not the crime of imbruing one's hands in the blood of an ordinary fellow being; but the still more inhuman crime of taking the life of a parent or a child—of one holding the nearest and tenderest relations with the murderer. Now this is the crime that is included with others by the late President Roosevelt under the designation of "race suicide," the one which I call "homicidal selfishness." It is the crime by which a parent, father or mother—it may be, and often is, both—bring about the destruction of the progeny begotten of them, and this in the most cruel and cowardly manner, and for the most sordid of all motives: lest they should be put to the trouble and expense of rearing children.

When the highwayman holds his revolver to your forehead and blows out your brains, though the motive is a sordid one, yet we are sometimes forced to admire the audacity of the miscreant, who often risks his own life in the enterprise; but to kill the fœtus in the womb of its mother, where it lies helpless and unresisting, and this from the sordid motive that the parents do not want to incur the trouble of rearing it, has no redeeming feature; it is simply the act of a monster.

Again, in the murder of a fellow being, whether the motive be robbery, or vengeance, or any other, there is, ordinarily at least, a chance of the victim's being able to say: "Lord, have mercy on me," before he is hurried to God's tribunal in judgment; but in the crime of which I speak, even this chance is withheld, and the unnatural parent deliberately robs his child of eternal beatitude.

In the course of my ministry I have met the case where an unhappy young woman, to save herself from shame, carefully baptized her infant and then dashed its head against a wall; but it remained for this heartless twentieth century to teach how the thing can be done scientifically, and how at the same time, the soul of the hapless victim may be robbed of the chance of eternal life.

O brethren, the ostrich mother is called cruel by Scripture because she abandons her eggs on the sand, and because she is insensible to the cries of her little ones calling for food, "as if they were not hers." Even "the fierce monsters of the deep put forth their dugs to suckle their young," but the daughter of God's people, the Christian mother, insensible alike to the promptings of nature and the pleadings of her child, at least for the supernatural life of its soul, takes that innocent babe and consigns it to eternal death.

And this carries me to a point further still. When I was a boy at school I had as class-fellow, a young man of good talents, but vain and self-seeking, who was never a favorite with his fellow-students. This young man afterwards went on for the medical profession, emigrated to Australia, and became a quack doctor, as they call them. He had an extensive practice

of a certain kind, and didn't stick at performing "unlawful operations." He was found out at last, brought to trial, convicted and hanged, as I was afterwards assured by an honorable member of one of the colonial parliaments. "Oh, yes, father," he said to me, "we strung him up." That's the way they do things in Australia.

Brethren, if the laws of this state were carried out strictly; or, rather, if evidence could be hunted up against miscreants who follow a like trade, there is more than one man or one woman in this city who, I will not say, should swing for his or her criminal practice; for I believe the penalty attaching to the performance of "unlawful operations" is not capital here, but who should be consigned to the penitentiary, there to expiate in shame and toil during the period of their natural lives their unlawful and inhuman deeds.

And now, dearly beloved, to conclude; let me exhort you to be solicitous for the health, bodily and spiritual, of your children. Watch over and provide for their temporal needs, so that, fulfilling this first duty of your state, you may be in a position to discharge the higher and more important duties of Christian parents, of training them in the virtues and practices of the Christian life.

THE DUTIES OF PARENTS. II

I

1. I have already addressed you on the first great duty of parents, that of providing for the material well-being of their children. To-day I wish to speak to you on the second of the parental duties, that of instructing i. e., training their children in the Christian life by word and example.

Before doing so let me observe, with regard to the former duty, that a general law of nature obliges all generative beings to exercise a like providence towards their offspring. And I would have you observe that the instinct which impels irrational creatures to provide for their young is the most deep-seated and universal which governs them. See the providence exercised by the smallest bird or insect in regard to its little ones. Does it not seem, once it has begotten offspring, to live but to provide for them? Even the most savage beast will suffer hunger and thirst and expose itself to the most frightful dangers, in order to procure proper nourishment for them. It would be ill-becoming in man, then, to be wanting in parental care and providence; in him who is raised above the irrational creatures, whose responsibility to God is so great, and whose offspring, in childhood, is so destitute of the means of self-preservation.

But the duty of which I wish to speak to-day is peculiar to human parents, and this by reason of the inability, morally speaking, of their offspring to attain their end without the special helps of instruction.

Placed as the connecting link, so to speak, between the animal creation, on the one hand, and the angelic world on the other, man occupies a unique position among creatures. He is ordained by God to the possession of eternal life, a consummation to which he attains by his personal efforts here below, conducted and seconded by grace. This being so, his mind needs to be furnished with the knowledge of God's law, which is his rule of life, and his will must be trained in habits of virtue.

Now the mind of the child at birth is like an unwritten page, while the will, being a blind faculty, as the philosophers say, follows its direction. All the training of the child, therefore, all its knowledge, must be taken in from what it sees and hears. This is so true that, long years before the little being attains the use of reason, indelible impressions are made upon it through the senses, though it be unconscious of them at the time. Its character is to a certain extent moulded. Good or bad dispositions are formed which, like seeds, take root and germinate, so as to develop into settled traits of character in after years.

The father and mother are the natural instructors of their children, just as they are their natural protectors and providers. The affection that the child has for its parents, added to the love that it feels instinctively the parents have for it, makes the little one receive the words of its father or mother as so many oracles of wisdom. Their sayings will be treasured up

in its memory. It will take kindly after the example given it; and thus habits of virtue or vice will be formed before that little being can apprehend the good of the one or the evil of the other.

What an obligation have not parents, then, to give a good example to their children—to say nothing, and to do nothing in their presence but what savors of morality and religion. What an obligation have they not to train their minds and to bend their wills, while still in the pliancy of childhood, to the practice of virtuous deeds.

This obligation God Himself inculcates in Scripture: "Lay up these, My words, in your hearts, and hang them for a memorial from your hands, and place them between your eyes. Teach your children that they meditate upon them, when you sit in your house, and when you walk on the way, and when you lie down and rise; that your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land sworn to your fathers that He would give them as long as heaven hangeth over earth." (Deut. VI, 7.)

2. Is it thus we see parents do in our days? I am well aware, indeed, of the many beautiful examples of parental virtue that we have amongst us; of the beautiful examples of generosity and piety ordinarily exhibited by our good Catholic people; but, alas, do we not find, on the other hand, only too many parents the corrupters rather of their children. They frequently utter bad words, and allow others to say bad words in the presence of their little ones. These words, received into the impressionable hearts of these children, become as a leaven of corruption to their whole after lives.

But if the language of such parents works such evil to their children, what shall I say of their vicious conduct and example? A father, for instance, comes home drunk. What acts is such a man not capable of doing? What, in fact, do his children not see him do while in this state; and would not his unseemly conduct lead one to believe that he considered himself wholly irresponsible as to what he said or did before them?

"Cursed of God be the scandal-giver," says Our Lord; "it were better for him that he had never been born!" "He that shall scandalize one of those little ones that believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were tied round his neck and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea." And, oh, if such anathemas fall from the lips of our Saviour on the ordinary scandal-giver, what curses are there not in store for him who abuses the position of responsibility in which he is placed by God to bring destruction on these dear children?

II

1. The heart of the little child is as a good soil, which, when cared for and cultivated, is bountiful in its produce. Dig into the rich alluvial soil; cultivate it; put into it good seed in the proper season; let the warm sun of heaven shine upon it; let the fructifying rains be showered upon it; let the moisture and the warmth penetrate it; a genial atmosphere play over it; in a few months you will gather the rich harvest of waving grain to gladden you during the winter. And so with the young. Form them to virtue;

teach them the truths of holy religion; sow the good seed of the Kingdom of God in the rich soil of their hearts; let the rich fertilizing graces from heaven fall upon them; let them grow up in the generous atmosphere of a bright and virtuous home; teach them the practice of piety, of charity, of self-denial, a love for truth, for justice, for chastity; your old age will be blessed with a loving and virtuous family.

I have likened the hearts of the young to a rich soil, but a soil that needs cultivation. Take, on the other hand, the bounteous earth that I have spoken of, and give it over to neglect and fallow. Turn it not with the plow or the cultivator. Let the winds of heaven carry to it their burden of noxious seeds. Scatter upon it yourself the tare, and the cockle, and the scutch, and the bramble; in time it will yield forth a crop of noxious weeds, which in turn will shed abroad their baneful influence on the adjoining meadows.

And so with the youth brought up in ignorance and vice. His soul is a generous but uncultivated soil. The nature that under more favorable conditions might yield the richest and most bounteous fruits; the soul that with proper care and culture might sparkle with the brightest gems of virtue, produces now but the rankling weeds of vice and crime. The more generous it is, the greater are the excesses to which its own impetuosity transports it, and the young man or woman becomes in time a plague to society, diffusing on all sides the stench of scandal; while within he or she is a smouldering firebrand of hell, tortured with passion and remorse, and needing but the stroke of death to burst into the lurid torch of the damned soul.

2. It has often been a subject of surprise to me to find grown-up boys and girls who have never been to confession, and who are kept from Mass on Sundays on the silliest pretexts. If you charge the parents of these children with this fact they will ride off on the plea that they are yet young and innocent.

Now, it should be known to you that a child of seven years ordinarily has the use of reason. Such a child is capable of committing sin; and, unhappily, only too often does it fall into mortal sin at that tender age. What, then, are we to think of parents who allow their children to scamper about like untrained colts and fillies till they are ten, twelve, or more years old, without even once having knelt at the feet of a priest, and without having been taught the obligation of attending Mass on Sundays? Is it any wonder that scandals are afterwards found to be rife among a Christian people, and that those children, when grown to be men and women, absent themselves for years from the Sacraments, when in their tender years their consciences were allowed by heedless parents to rot and fester in sin and evil habits? A child, as soon as it knows the difference between right and wrong, should be treated as a grown-up man or woman. It should be sent regularly to confession. It should be taught the obligation of Sunday Mass, and be gradually inured to all the practices of Christian piety.

Let me conclude, then, by exhorting you, my dear fathers and mothers, to a faithful discharge of this duty towards your children. It is your greatest duty in life—the one for which you will be called to strictest account hereafter. Convinced of the supreme importance to your children of a thorough training in the

Christian law and practice, spare no pains in giving them this training. By so doing you will respond to your high vocation as Christian parents, and you will have the reward here of seeing your little ones grow up in grace and virtue, "like olive plants around the table of the Lord"; and, hereafter, of hearing from the lips of the Eternal Judge the words of divine commendation: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

THE DUTIES OF PARENTS. III

"He that loveth his son frequently chastiseth him, that he may rejoice in his latter end and not groan after the doors of his neighbors.

"He that instructeth his son shall be praised in him and shall glory in him in the midst of them of his household. . . .

"A horse not broken becometh stubborn; and a child left to himself will become headstrong. . . .

"Give thy son his way: he will make thee afraid; play with him; and he will make thee sorrowful. . . .

"Bow down his neck while he is young, and beat his sides while he is a child; lest he grow stubborn and regard thee not; and so be a sorrow of heart to thee."—(Eccl. XXX, 1 sqq.)

I

1. In former instructions I spoke to you on certain duties of parents in regard to their children, the duties, namely, of providing for them, and of training them in the practices of a Christian life. Now, parents have other duties in regard to the same children that I desire to call your attention to, and I devote this discourse particularly to the exposition of a third parental duty—that of correction.

And, in the first place, I would ask you to observe from my text that the Holy Spirit does not seem much in favor of those soft methods in the upbringing of children which are so much in vogue nowadays;

when parents through a false and mistaken affection allow their children to have their own way in almost everything, while they themselves, after abdicating the position of authority which nature and religion have imposed on them, come in time to be treated as only secondary personages in their own households.

Now this duty becomes necessary, first of all, because of the diseased condition of our nature consequent on the fall. Were our wills upright as those of our first parents in the state of original innocence, parental correction, speaking in the ordinary sense of the word, would be unnecessary. For it would need but that the mind should know what was right in order that the will should tend to it and execute it. But, like the earth cursed by God, when left to itself it brings forth only thorns and thistles, "the thoughts and heart of a man are prone to evil from his youth." Leave the child to its own devices, "Give thy son his way,"—without a special providence of God, he will develop vicious habits, which will grow with him, and in time become to him as a second nature. He will become headstrong, and lazy, and proud, and selfish. He will develop sensual instincts and depraved habits, which incline him to the level of the brute.

Add to this that society in our days is so corrupt that it is hard for the young soul to escape the contagion of bad example. Let a young man or woman be ever so pure and well disposed, his or her virtue will be put to a severe trial by association with the world. In cities, especially, where so many allurements are held out to the inexperienced, the dangers of corruption are multiplied. See the many baits that are held out for our boys and girls in the public ways, and in

places of amusement; the scandals coming from the older generation; the temptations to gambling, to drunkenness, to impurity and other excesses. I will not speak to you of the many agents of the devil—depraved men and women who seem to devote their life to the trade of bringing souls to perdition.

2. Who is to counteract those evil influences from without and within, and to direct the young heart in the observance of the law of the Lord? Whose watchful eye is to detect the first symptoms of evil, and whose duty is it to apply the remedy of correction before evil takes root in the heart? It is yours, parents, on whom God has laid the tremendous responsibility of watching over your children and directing them in the path of virtue.

Do not imagine that this work of providence and correction is to be done solely in the school, whether by lay teachers, Brothers, or nuns. Their duty consists in great part in imparting to them secular instruction. Do not imagine either that you can throw over on the clergy, whether secular or regular, a duty that primarily belongs to you; that accompanies you everywhere and at every moment of your life "cleaves to your bones." On the faithful discharge of this duty your salvation depends; and should you fail in it, even though you should succeed in every other enterprise, your career will be a failure before God, and you will merit a severe punishment. See the chastisement inflicted on the high priest Heli, spoken of in Scripture. This man, although he otherwise led an edifying life, neglected to correct his wicked sons, who gave scandal in the sight of all Israel. And for this alone, disasters came upon his whole family. His sons

were cut down by the sword. He himself with other members of his family died a violent death; and the dignity of the high priesthood was taken away from his family forever. For, as the Lord's message was conveyed to him by the prophet Samuel, "Behold, I do a thing in Israel, and whosoever shall hear it, both his ears shall tingle. In that day I will raise up against Heli all the things I have spoken concerning his house. I will begin, and I will make an end. For I have foretold unto him that I will judge his house forever, for iniquity; because he knew that his sons did wickedness, and did not chastise them. Therefore, have I sworn to the house of Heli, that the iniquity of his house shall not be expiated with victims, nor offerings, forever."

II

1. Now, in carrying out this duty of correction, parents are liable to fall into mistakes, and this in two ways. There are some parents who are most careful and conscientious in the training and correction of their children while they are young; but when they grow up to boyhood and girlhood, they consider they are now of sufficient age to take care of themselves, and so they almost entirely relax their vigilance and government over them. They allow their boys to remain out late at night; to go where they will; to associate with whom they please. Even the signs of drink on them when they return home, or other more degrading symptoms, do not alarm them. In the same way they relax their vigilance and government over their daughters, are not alarmed at seeing them remain

long hours away from home on Sunday or other evenings; do not take alarm at noticing that they manifest a decided inclination for frequenting alone young men's society. Rather, they are pleased at seeing that their daughters are attractive to young men, and that they have admirers.

Foolish parents, you dream not of the evil that is brewing in the hearts of your boys and girls, and that later on in life will blast for you the hopes of earlier years.

You should know that of all periods of life, there is none so dangerous to virtue as that in which the child breaks forth into the young man or woman, and none in which so many of the one and of the other sex come to grief. A celebrated English author, writing of this period in boys, say, from seventeen to twenty-three, calls it "the hateful age." And so it is in some respects. The young person come to this period in life is neither a man nor a boy. He is a man in his pretensions. He puts on the airs of a man. He thinks himself a superb fellow. He is wiser than his elders, more learned than his teachers. He talks tall and takes advice with impatience; while at the same time he has neither the experience nor the mature knowledge of a man. His information is undigested; his views of things are crude and narrow; he is but a boy in wisdom; and with all his fine pretensions he makes huge blunders and is apt to plunge into a course of life which will be ruinous to him in his whole after career.

In the same way, never does a girl need the prudent and firm guidance of her parents more than in that unsteady age when she breaks into womanhood. In

the first blush of her womanly charms she is courted by admirers, whose importunate attentions are enough to put the steadiest virtue to the test. Her virtue is the object of attack by every young libertine of the other sex; and those attentions only too often provoke in her girlish heart the unholy fumes of impure love.

Ah, my brethren, how many a sad tale could be told of the young woman who preserved her virginal innocence unsullied up to this age; who was an angel in thought; but who became degraded, lost to honor and virtue by associating with young men, and sunk into impurities in after life, even as the hog wallows in the mire. Take heed, therefore, dear parents, of the conduct of your boys and girls during the unsteady period of youth; and remember that at no period of life do they require the firm, yet gentle, government of parents more than at the age when the strong passions of youth first begin to rage within their souls.

2. Another mistake often made by parents is that they allow their children to grow up to an advanced period before they send them to school or instruct them in their religious duties. Like colts that are let free to gallop about the meadows, these children are allowed to indulge their wild youth, sometimes, till they are ten or twelve years of age. Contrary to the advice of the Holy Spirit, parents give them liberty "and wink at their devices." Is it any wonder that in after years these parents reap the consequences of their folly? Like horses over-matured before they are put to harness, these children "will become headstrong and bring sorrow of heart" to their wretched parents.

It is said of the Arabs that they have a system in the training of their horses quite different in prin-

ciple to that which obtains in these countries. Here we leave our young horses on the hills till they come to maturity, and then we break them in; that is to say, we break them of their habits of wild liberty which they enjoyed for the first few years of their life. The Arab horses, on the contrary, are trained from their birth. They are reared in their master's tent; they grow up under his fostering care; become the companions of his children; are trained to habits of gentleness and obedience till, as a result, they become as docile as dogs.

Some of you have perhaps seen those trained Arab steeds, have admired their marvelous docility. To see the Arab on his courser, horse and rider seem as if they were one sentient being. The Arab, himself a horseman from his youth, seems at home in the saddle. In perfect confidence, with reins lying loose on his courser's neck, he governs him by word. At full gallop with his long gun he can pick off the swallow in its flight.

In the rearing of children the Arab system is to be preferred, where the little ones are domesticated from their childhood; are trained in the habits of piety; are taught obedience to lawful authority; and the faithful observance of the ordinary Christian duties, rather than the system of breaking them in after they are allowed to grow up to an advanced age. The child, as soon as it has come to the use of reason, as soon as it knows the difference between right and wrong, should be treated as a grown up man or woman. It should be taught the obligation of Sunday Mass. It should be sent regularly to Confession. It should be

impressed with the importance of morning and evening prayers; of obedience to superiors; of control over its growing passions; in a word, it should be gradually inured to all the practices of Christian piety.

3. And here let me say a word or two on a matter that has often struck me forcibly. It is the appalling heedlessness of parents in regard to the companionships which their children form, and to the occupations which fill the hours that they are away from home. Have they any conception of the acts that are often done, and of the scandals that are given and received during those hours that their children are at play; of the number of lives that are blighted as a result of what they see and hear? Let me tell you that the period of life from ten to fourteen or fifteen is often the one of greatest temptation in the life of boy or girl; that it is precisely at this age that had been learned those vices that bring about the shattered reputations and the disastrous failures that we witness in those boys and girls in after life; and that the depravity that is growing amongst the younger generation in some places at the present time is appalling.

What will become of those undisciplined youth in after years? What road will they take in life?

You know not; I cannot tell. No one can divine. Even the Wise Man in the Book of Proverbs is obliged to acknowledge that the future of such youth is a mystery to him. "Three things appear difficult to me," says he, "the course of an eagle in his flight; the way of a serpent on a rock; and the path of a ship in the midst of the ocean; but the fourth is

entirely unknown to me—the way of a man in his youth." (Prov. XXX, 18 sq.)

Yes, a young man,—and the same can be said of a young woman,—has, in the motions of his passions all the rapidity and impetuosity of the eagle in his flight. He has in the variety of his desires, in the giddiness of his inclinations, all the sinuosity and all the twistings of a serpent. He has in the different thoughts that divide him, and in the multitude of objects to which he is carried, all the movements of a vessel beaten by waves and storms. In such a situation how will he guide himself without a master? It is your duty, dear fathers and mothers, to rule this eagle in his flight. It is yours to trace for this serpent the course he is to take. It is yours to tack safely into port this vessel surrounded by rocks and quicksands, and beaten incessantly by storms.

4. You have the responsibility; nature has imposed it on you; God has imposed it on you; you yourselves have voluntarily undertaken the tremendous responsibility, not only of rearing and providing for the temporal wants of your children, but also of instructing and edifying them, and of watching over them so to preserve them from moral harm. Aye, and you must correct them too, and severely, if necessary, but without passion. If it be necessary, I say, you must "beat their sides while they are children," that you may bend their wills beneath the yoke of obedience.

If you fulfill those duties with care and fidelity you will obtain the blessing of God for yourselves and for them; and He will say unto you as He said to Abraham of old: "Because you have been faithful and have not spared your child for the love of Me,

I will lay blessing upon your family." Your children will be virtuous. You will gain as a recompense of your cares, repose of conscience, a happy old age, and eternal beatitude hereafter.

THE DUTIES OF CHILDREN

"Honor thy father and thy mother, that thou mayest be long-lived in the land which the Lord thy God shall give thee."—(Ex. XX, 12.)

I

1. It has become the vogue in these days to celebrate not merely the old-fashioned birthday feasts of different members of the family, but, in widening circles, other family feasts also. Thus we have "Mothers' Day," and "Fathers' Day," and "Children's Day," and so forth. And on those days the members of the family gather together to partake of social and family joys.

These celebrations are good and to be commended; since they promote good feeling and charity among those who are bound together by close ties of kinship. But it seems to me that they often fail in their object, and for this reason that they are founded, ordinarily, on mere human sentiment. And we are becoming only too familiar with the spectacle of both parents and children neglecting the great family duties commanded them by God and nature.

Thus, while fathers and mothers allow every liberty to their children, and give way to their every whim, they fail utterly in their duty of giving those same children a Christian and religious training. On the other hand, children who are wont, when those

family feasts come around, to make lavish gifts to their parents and other relatives, on other days of the year are wayward and disrespectful to them; nay, often treat them with the greatest harshness and cruelty.

I purpose, therefore, to speak to you to-day on the duties of children toward their parents. These are: love, respect, obedience, and service. The first of these duties is love. It is founded on the same principles as that which we owe to God.

We are obliged to love God above all things, as our Creator, our Sovereign Lord, and our Father by excellence. But after Him, we ought to love above all others those whom Divine Providence employed to give us being.

We must love our neighbor as ourselves. Now, who touches us so closely as our father and mother? We must love those who love us. After the Heavenly Father, who loves us as dearly as our parents? They love us often to folly: even so far as to sacrifice for us all that they hold dear in the world, and, only too often, their own salvation. We ought to love those who have done us good. And who, after God, have done us so much good as our parents?

Enter a little, my dear brethren, into the details of what you have received from your parents, and what they have undergone for you. Your mother, did she not bear you for nine months in her bosom with extreme troubles and disgusts? Did she not give you birth at the peril of her own life? What cares and vigils to rear you till you were, say, five years old? And all through your life how did she not follow you with loving care and tenderness? Who so rejoiced

in your good fortune and who so sympathised with you when sickness and sorrow overtook you? Oh, yes; a mother's love is the most Christlike of all loves: the most generous and self-sacrificing. See how it was exemplified in that Irish mother who gave her heart's blood to nourish her starving child. It was in the famine times, when she, like thousands of others, fled from the fated land. The ship on which she was borne was driven on the rocks. It was many days before the gale subsided so as to allow the pilots to come on board. They found her a death ship, with apparently not a living soul aboard. However, it seemed to them that they heard the crying of a child. They entered the state-room from which the cries proceeded, to find indeed a live baby. But what a sight! The mother lay in death with her breasts slashed open to feed her starving baby with her heart's blood when they went dry through hardship and starvation. Oh, yes, there's nothing so Christlike on earth as a mother's love.

And your father, did he not toil for you continually? Did he not bear the languor of heat and the rigor of cold to procure you the necessary food and clothing? What can you return to him for so many benefits? Will you refuse him your heart, your love, your tenderness, your affection? If so, you would be harder than iron, and more insensible than the rocks. And could it be that nature bring forth such a monster as a child who does not love its father and mother? Yes, my friends, it brings forth every day and in great numbers those horrid monsters, those denatured children, who far from loving their parents, hate them; who cannot either see them or support them; who desire their death; who have their eyes only on the inheritance

they look for from them; who are kept with difficulty from laying on them a parricidal hand. How many sad examples of such have we not seen? O detestable crime! crime which no punishment could expiate; and which would seem impossible if experience did not prove it only too real and true.

2. The second duty of children towards their parents is respect. This respect consists in an interior esteem and veneration of their persons, and in different exterior marks which they ought to give of this esteem and this veneration. They ought to have a great deference for their sentiments, for their advice, for their commands. They ought to hide their lightest faults with the greatest care, and remember the curse that fell on one of the sons of Noe for having been wanting in this duty.

"Honor thy father and thy mother," says God to us, "that thou mayest be long-lived in the land that the Lord thy God shall give thee." "He who honors his father," the Bible continues, "shall live a long time: and he who honors his mother shall amass riches." Children should never reproach their father or mother on account of their faults, or make them known to anyone.

The honor of parents as well as their shame descends upon their children. If it is necessary to make representations to them, it should be done with humility and submission, and in respectful terms. They should bear with an invincible patience their ill humors and imperfections. They must never allow to escape from them rude, angry, or arrogant words, and with greater reason contemptuous or injurious ones.

3. But is it thus that so many ill-reared and impious

children treat their parents?—children who look upon their fathers and mothers as if they were their servants: who scarcely deign to give them the name of father or mother? As long as they hope for something from them, they keep within bounds. But when they become their own master by a donation, or by a contract of marriage, they treat them with the greatest insolence. Hear, then, denatured children, what the Holy Ghost says to you in Scripture: "Because you despised your parents, and insulted them, in place of rendering them the respect you owe them, you shall be cursed by God: The ravens shall pluck out your eyes; and birds of prey shall devour your carcass: because your death shall be shameful, and you shall be deprived of the advantage of sepulture."

This is what happened to the detestable Absalom, the son of David. His father loved him, perhaps too much. This young man hoped for his father's death that he might mount the throne of Israel; but as the term appeared to him too long, he formed a conspiracy against him. He declared war upon him: shamefully dishonored him; and was on the point of taking from him his life together with his kingdom. But the justice of God could not allow such a crime to go unpunished. The criminal was overcome, and his whole army put to flight, and as he fled from battle, his long hair was caught in the branches of an oak tree and he was held suspended, till Joab, the general of the king's army, coming upon him, pierced his body with many thrusts of a lance, and he was buried as a malefactor under a mound of stones.

St. Bonaventure relates an event which is not less tragic. A father, having despoiled himself of all his

goods in order to place his son in an advantageous position, fell at last into extreme misery, and was obliged to beg. He sometimes came to the house of his ungrateful son, who repelled him in a strange manner. One day he came to him whilst he was at table with his wife. When he perceived him, he said: "Behold our old beggar who is always at the door." He locked up the good things he was partaking of, and commanded a servant to give him a little bread and porridge. When his father had departed, he went himself to fetch what he had hidden away. But the moment he opened the cupboard an immense toad jumped into his face and attached itself so firmly to him that it was impossible to tear it away, and the unhappy man died raging mad with this terrible mark of God's anger still clinging to him.

It is told how a young man, in a fit of ferocious anger, dragged his aged father by the heels from the family home to a certain spot near the rural well, when the old man cried out faintly: "Hold, my son, when I was a young man I dragged my father by the heels to this spot. It is sufficient. The just God is looking on."

In the Old Law the penalty of death was inflicted, by the command of God Himself, on children who were wanting in respect for their parents. And even among the most barbarous nations this crime was always punished severely.

4. On the contrary, how many blessings were conferred on children, wise and well-reared, who paid respect to their father and mother as they were bound to? And with what complaisance were they not regarded? Let me give you two very touching examples. The first

is of King Solomon. His mother having come into the council chamber where he was, to ask a favor, he came down from his throne when he saw her enter. He saluted her profoundly and prepared for her a throne beside his own.

The second example is of Blessed Pope Benedict XI. Come from a low position in society, he was raised by reason of his great merits to the chair of St. Peter. After his elevation to the pontifical throne, his mother, who was a poor peasant, set out to see her son. She was dressed up as a princess, and thus adorned, was presented to the Sovereign Pontiff. This great man, truly humble, would not acknowledge her in the magnificent clothes in which she was dressed, and said that his mother was only a poor country woman. She was obliged to retire in confusion. She put on her ordinary dress, and presented herself a second time. Then the Pope descended from his throne, embraced her tenderly, and addressed her in these words: "Yes, I recognize you now for my dear and honored mother," and he treated her from that hour with the greatest respect and tenderness. These examples are touching, my dear brethren. But what are they to that one which is above them all? It is of a God made Man who humbled himself even to obey a very poor woman and a very humble craftsman. "He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them." Love and honor your parents, my dear children, if not for all those reasons that I have given you, at least, after the example of Him who has been constituted the Model to us all. If you fulfill those duties towards them, it may be said of you what has been said of this Model of all children:

You will grow not only in age, but also "in wisdom and grace with God and men."

II

1. The third duty of children towards their parents is obedience. This obedience is of indispensable obligation, especially in all that has regard to the good order of the family and the regulation of morals. It is also true that every time children fail in these respects in a considerable matter and with full deliberation, they are guilty of a mortal sin. But how badly observed is this precept? How many rebellious children live in a continual habit of disobedience, and simply do as they please? They are evidently unworthy of absolution and the Eucharist, and they cease not to approach the Divine Mysteries with a diabolical effrontery, charging themselves thereby with as many sacrileges as they make confessions and communions.

This obedience of which we speak ought to have many qualities. It must be prompt and cordial. One should obey with joy, and not murmuring and grumbling. It should be universal. A child must obey in all that is just and reasonable. It should be at the same time prudent. Should it happen (which God forbid) that a father or mother command evil things, the child must say to them that we must obey God rather than men. Meanwhile, when there is place for doubt as to whether the thing commanded is bad, or whether it may perhaps be permitted, a child ought not easily judge the conduct of his parents, but consult his pastor or confessor.

As regards a vocation to a state of life, children ought to defer as much as possible to the will of their parents, but always on condition that it is not opposed to that of God, who alone has the right to call to a state and to a profession.

2. The last duty of children towards their parents is service, which they are obliged to render them. That service ought to extend to their body and to their soul. To their body: that is to say, they are obliged to nourish and support them according to their condition, if they have not the means to provide for themselves: to procure for them necessary remedies and all their other wants in health and in sickness, as far as their faculties will permit.

As regards their soul, they ought to pray for them: to contribute to their salvation with all their power: to see that they receive the sacraments at the hour of death; and after their decease, to execute faithfully their last wills.

How many children render themselves guilty through the neglect of a duty so just and natural? Some abandon their parents when they no longer have need of them. Others still more cruel take away from them by violence, by surprise or by stratagem, the fruits of their labors, and reduce them to poverty. Many are not ashamed to see them beg when they have it in their power to nourish them. Others do not carry out their testamentary dispositions; do not make the restitutions with which they are charged; do not acquit themselves of the Masses which were ordered them; pay not the pious legacies, foundations, and alms they have specified and commanded: and thereby they draw upon themselves the curse of Heaven. Impious,

ungrateful, cruel, denatured children, I wish here to have your monstrous ingratitude put to shame by the example of a pagan woman towards her father, who had been condemned to die of hunger in prison. It is a singular and admirable event, as told by the classical authors. This woman, seeing her father reduced to so frightful an extremity without knowing how to succor him, bethought her of an expedient which her tenderness suggested to her. She was a nursing mother and she demanded of the jailer permission to visit her parent once a day. He permitted it on condition that she be searched each time in order to be certain that she bring nothing in the way of nourishment to him. A considerable time passed and the prisoner very far from dying, appeared to enjoy perfect health. Spies were set upon the movements of father and child, and they soon discovered that the young woman nourished her father with her own milk. The civil authorities were so affected by her conduct that they pardoned the father in consideration of the daughter, and they changed the prison into a temple, which was dedicated to the goddess of piety.

I have now, dearly beloved, detailed the respective duties to each other of parents and children. See you, one and all, that you fulfill them as an act of homage to your God and Creator. If you do, He will reward you abundantly with the rewards promised in Scripture to dutiful parents and children, which are: a long and happy life, spiritual riches and glory here; and hereafter, the sweetness, the joys, the glory, the ineffable reward of a happy eternity.

SENSUALITY—FASTING

"At that time Jesus was led by the spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil and when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterwards He was hungry."—(Matt. IV, 11.)

1. In no scene of our Lord's life is there brought home to us more vividly the double capacity in which He appears amongst us, than in this that I have read for you from this passage of the Gospel.

In it we behold Him, on the one hand, suffering the pangs of hunger, praying to His Heavenly Father, and tempted by the devil, even as we; and, on the other, subsisting for forty days and nights without nourishment of any kind, repelling the tempter with Divine power and scorn, and, finally, ministered to by angels as the Son of God. Without treating of those apparently contradictory manifestations of our blessed Lord, each of which would claim a sermon for itself, let me, as the season suggests, make some remarks relative to the precept of fasting which the Church has instituted in memory of the fast of our Lord, and which all Catholics worthy of the name practise in those days, in compliance with her decrees.

2. And, first, I say that it was not without grave reasons that the Saviour gave sanction to the universal practice of fasting by His own fast in the desert.

When we cast a glance over the history of the true

Church on earth, whether it be the Catholic Church, or the Church of the Jews as it existed before the coming of our Lord, or that which existed under the law of nature back to the first days of creation, we find on all sides evidence to show that the practice of fasting was common among the faithful, and that through it many benefits were conferred upon them. If, I say, we go back year by year and century by century of the Church's life, we find the Lenten fast religiously observed by the faithful. We find, on the one hand, the holy regulations of the bishops and councils to fix its limits, define what was lawful and what was not lawful to be eaten during the holy season, and determine how the Lent was to be observed; and the faithful, on the other hand, submit themselves to the regulations laid down by their pastors and fulfill them with a holy enthusiasm and joy.

If, furthermore, we take up the pages of the Old Testament, we see the whole calendar of the Jews studded with days of fasting and abstinence, days of prayer and general mourning. Nay, we have the threat of God that that man's name be blotted out of the Book of Life who should refuse to join in the solemn fast and mourning prescribed by the Jewish Law.

And if we go back further still to the days of the patriarchs and of the law of nature, we again come upon the same salutary practice among men.

3. And why, you will ask, this universal practice of fasting in ancient times, as in our days; in the Church of the Jews and of the patriarchs, as well as in that founded by Jesus Christ; in the days of the Prophet Elias as well as in our own?

Well, dear brethren, we shall understand something

of the reason for it if we bear in mind that it was the contrary vice of sensuality that brought about the greatest evils that afflict mankind. What was it that, in the first place, brought about the destruction of our first parents in Paradise? Was it not sensuality or the gratification of the pleasures of taste? "The fruit," says Scripture, speaking of the Fall, "appeared fair to the eye and beautiful to behold." And Eve, judging that a fruit so fair to the eye must have a delicious taste, "did eat thereof, and she did give to Adam and he did eat." It was sensuality, then, or the unlawful indulgence in eating, that brought about the fall.

If from this source of our misfortunes we descend the stream of time, we behold on the right hand and on the left the evils brought upon our race through the same shameful vice. What was it that brought about the huge catastrophe of the deluge? Ah, my brethren, the waters of the flood rolled mountain high, but higher still in the sight of heaven mounted the flood of sensuality that affected the whole human race and even made God repent that He had created man.

And if we come down further still, behold another most dreadful calamity by reason of the same fatal sin. "The region about the Jordan," says Holy Scripture, "was rich, and well watered, and well fitted for grazing and tillage," and it was on account of its natural advantages that Lot chose it for his home. But by how much the richer was the soil, by how much the more were its inhabitants privileged by heaven; by so much did they the more indulge their love for sensual pleasures. And so greatly was Almighty God displeased with their abominable irregu-

larities that He rained down fire and brimstone upon them and destroyed the whole region, containing five populous cities. And to this day the waters of the Dead Sea roll, a monument of God's anger, over what was one of the most smiling portions of the earth.

Nor are these the only signal examples of chastisements brought upon mankind by reason of the sinful indulgence of the appetites.

We read in the Pentateuch that while Moses was on Mount Horeb, the people of God sinned by sensuality, and from sensuality fell into other crimes. "They sat down to eat and to drink," says Scripture, "and they rose up to dance and to play,"—at bad games and idolatry. And God, to punish their sin, commanded the faithful Levites to unsheath the sword and to cut their way through the camp. Nor did they desist till the blood of three and twenty thousand corpses dyed the sward on which was pitched the camp of Israel.

These, dear brethren, are a few examples, a very few, but yet the most striking, of the evils that follow from sensuality, which is nothing else than the unlawful indulgence of sensual gratifications.

4. But, on the other hand, what examples does not the same history afford us of the blessings obtained from God, and of the many evils averted through fasting and mortification? The people of God at various times incurred the divine anger. How often did they not fall into idolatry and other crimes? How did they avert the chastisements that were in store for them? It was always by penance and fasting. If they were attacked by their enemies; if a great calamity had fallen on them; if they were struck down with the plague; if the heavens became as brass and refused

to give moisture to refresh the thirsty earth, and a great famine followed—in all calamities, if the people turned to God by penance and fasting, they were delivered from their evils. The multitude murmured against God. They fell into idolatry. They committed the crimes of the Gentiles. It was fasting and penance that restored them to prosperity and God's friendship.

During the captivity of Babylon a wicked man plotted the destruction of the whole race of the Israelites. A universal fast was proclaimed, and, as a result, not only were they delivered from death, but there was brought about their restoration to their native land with all their ancient privileges and a great share of their former prosperity as a nation.

And if we turn from the examples of general fasts that are given in sacred history and from the benefits that followed from them, to individual fasts and to individual benefits obtained thereby, how beautiful the custom amongst the ancient peoples, and how salutary! It was the prayer of the fasting Anna that gave to Israel the greatest of her judges, Samuel. Samson, the champion of Israel, was born and nurtured in fasting. By fasting Elias brought humiliation on the enemies of God and sealed up the heavens that they should not bedew the land for three years and a half. By fast Judith obtained power from God to slay the enemy of her people. By fast Moses obtained the pardon of those who transgressed the divine commands. By fast John the Baptist became worthy to be the Precursor of Jesus Christ and the preacher of a salutary penance to the Jews. By fast all the saints of Jesus Christ have triumphed over the enemies of their salvation and obtained the promised goal.

5. A most striking example of the efficacy of fasting, when joined to prayer and trust in God, is given in the Book of Chronicles. It is there stated that on a certain occasion the land of Juda was invaded by the armies of three powerful kings, who had entered into a league for the destruction of the people of God. The Israelites, with their pious king, Josaphat, were in great trepidation. The whole land was filled with lamentation. They retired into their walled cities and into the interior of their houses. They ran before their king and clamored that he might obtain that their lives be spared. He was a man who feared God, and he knew that help was to be obtained only from Heaven. So he ordered a general fast with prayer to be proclaimed throughout the land. The people obeyed his command. They fasted for three days; and on the fourth day, when he was about to lead them against their enemies, they looked out from their watch-towers, and, behold, to the astonishment and joy of all, the whole plain as far as the eye could reach was strewn with the corpses of their fallen foes. Yes, at the fast and penance of His people the heart of God was softened, and, without raising a hand, they beheld their enemies laid low, slain by His powerful right arm.

Dear brethren, in our days, as indeed in all time, the territories of God's people, the precious souls redeemed by Jesus Christ, are attacked by a coalition of three powerful tyrants, and they are, as described by St. John, "the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life," or, to describe them in plainer language, the spirit of pride, and of avarice, and of lust. These tyrants grievously afflict God's people, and threaten their eternal destruc-

tion. What means shall we adopt to repel their evil assaults and preserve the supernatural life of our souls?

6. Oh, let us, and especially in these days consecrated to prayer and penance, in imitation of God's chosen people, and after the still holier example of our blessed Lord, be faithful in keeping the fast ordered by the Church; and let us further make that fast acceptable to God by prayer and contrition for our past sins. Then when the holy Easter morning arrives it will find our enemies weakened and dispersed, ourselves restored to the liberty and peace of a good conscience, and our Prince and Captain, Jesus Christ, on His triumphant Resurrection from the tomb, permitted to reign over the holy land of our souls in perennial peace and glory.

JUSTICE

"Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God."—(Matt. XXII, 15–21.)

I

1. In this reply to the Pharisees and Herodians our Lord gave proof of His divine sagacity and foiled them once again in their efforts to discredit Him before the public. These wily men, after many ineffective attempts to catch Him in His words, at last proposed to Him this captious question; whether it was lawful to pay tribute to Caesar or not. If He should answer in the affirmative, they would take opportunity to have Him denounced before the people as the enemy of their race, who claimed exemption from taxation to a Gentile people as being of the seed of Abraham and the chosen people of God.

If, on the other hand, He should reply that it was not lawful, they would report Him to the governor, Pontius Pilate, as a seditious man and an enemy of the Roman domination.

Our Lord, knowing their malice, does not give them the direct answer they desire, but contents Himself with the general injunction: "Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and to God what belongs to God."

This answer, though it might seem at first sight to be but a mere evasion of a reply to an awkward question, will be found to contain the affirmation of the principle of universal justice. "Give to Caesar," that is, as the

type of your neighbor, universally, "what belongs to him." In other words, "Deal justly by every man."

This leads me to address you to-day on the important subject of justice; and I shall treat of it as it has respect to temporal goods merely. It is a subject that in every age has need to be held before the public. For "the concupiscence of the eyes," the inordinate craving for the possession of temporal goods, is one of the great disorders that reign in the world. In our times especially, thanks to the extravagant and luxurious habits of life which many lead, and to the general waning of morality consequent upon the weakening of faith, it is a subject that demands to be "preached from the housetops," and to be ever dinned into the ears of the faithful.

2. Now, justice may be looked on either as a law or as a virtue. As a virtue, it urges us continually to give everyone his own. Its province, then, in this respect is to urge the restitution of things unjustly possessed; the repair of wrongs; abstinence from fraud; fidelity in contracts; and, in general, the preservation of equity among all men.

As a law it is the correlative of right, and forbids us three things in regard to the goods of our neighbor: first, it forbids us to take unjustly what belongs to another, and this is intimated to us in the seventh Commandment: "Thou shalt not steal." Again, it forbids us to desire unjustly what belongs to another, as we are enjoined in the ninth Commandment: "Thou shalt not covet;" and, lastly, it forbids us to keep unjustly what belongs to another: "Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar."

This law is founded on the natural independence of each one as regards his physical being, and on the rights which that natural independence implies. For, you must know, dearly beloved, that though we are all socially interdependent on one another; though there is an intercommunication of goods and services amongst all states and all ranks of society; yet, each one is created physically independent of his fellows; that is to say, he looks to God alone for the preservation of his being, and the rights consequent on that being. Therefore, no one can lawfully disturb him in the peaceable possession of those things that are his, whether they come to him by inheritance, or through his own industry, or otherwise.

Moreover, God from the beginning gave a positive sanction to the ownership of temporal goods. For we are told in the book of Genesis that He said to our first parents, who, in this respect, as in others, represented the human race: "Have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and the birds of the air, and the beasts, and the whole earth." Now, God could not have given the ownership of temporal goods to man without, at the same time, making that ownership inviolable. He, then, that invades the rights of another by unjustly depriving him of those things that are his, commits a wrong at one and the same time against him whose rights he so invades, and against God by whose will he possesses them, and who has made Himself the surety to His subject's rights.

Hence, the Commandment: "Thou shalt not steal" —a Commandment which has a very wide signification and forbids all external acts of injustice.

II

But the law of justice goes further still, and regulates the motions of the human heart, by forbidding us even to desire unjustly what belongs to another.

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods; neither shalt thou desire his wife, nor his house, nor his servant, nor his handmaid, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is his."

Our desires are to be reckoned good or bad according to the character of the things desired. If these are good and praiseworthy; worthy of praise and merit also will be the desires that stretch out to them.

But if, on the contrary, the objects of our desires be evil; evil also will be the desires themselves; according to the twofold principle laid down by our Lord: "If thy eye," that is, if thy desire, "be single, thy whole body will be lightsome; but if thy eye," also thy desire, "be evil, thy whole body will be darksome." And is it not according to common sense that if God forbids us to do evil, that man cannot be innocent who desires to do the evil thing forbidden?

But God, seeing that there is a craving in our hearts for the possession of earthly goods, and that this craving is apt to develop into unjust desires, takes care to promulgate the Commandment: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods, neither shalt thou desire his wife, nor his house, nor his servant, nor his handmaid, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is his."

When we look around us in the world to-day and see how men carry on business transactions with one another, what is the conviction that is brought home to us as their observance of this law of justice? Thanks

be to God, the great body of men and women strive to act honorably and justly by one another. But are there not many exceptions? Do we not meet with cases not a few, where a merchant, for instance, will impose on his customers by false weights and adulterated goods; or where they in turn refuse to pay him his lawful bills? A master overtaxes his servants, or deprives them of their lawful wages; or they in turn steal his goods, or injure his property, or neglect their tasks.

What shall I say of the frauds that are committed in buying and selling; on the exchange; in racing and gambling, etc.?

O brethren, it is not in the woods and highways that we have robbers nowadays; but thievery enters into every business; so that we seem to arrive again at the degenerate days referred to by the prophet (Osee), when "theft hath flooded the earth as a deluge."

Look into your own hearts, my brethren, and see whether they will bear the scrutiny of divine justice. Examine whether in your past dealings with others there were not acts of injustice for which you can only expect condemnation from the Sovereign Judge. Have these injustices been repaired? Have you made amends for past wrongs? Do you at this moment possess goods that are not your own? and if so, oh, let me remind you that the law of justice involves a third prohibition not less obliging than the other two—"Thou shalt not keep unjustly what belongs to another."

III

This law of restitution, though apparently and in its terms a positive one, is in reality prohibitive. Now,

there is this important difference between a positive commandment and a prohibitive one: that the positive commandment, while it obliges always, does not demand the fulfilment of its behests at all times; whereas the prohibitive one, on the contrary, not only obliges always, but moreover demands its observance at all times. Perhaps I can make this clearer by a little illustration. It is said: "Keep holy the Sabbath day." "Honor thy father and thy mother." "Thou shalt hear Mass on Sundays and holydays." "Thou shalt fast on the days commanded." These four commandments oblige always; but we are not expected to be engaged in fulfilling them at all times. We are not expected to be at all times engaged in keeping the Sunday. A child is not required to pass his life in making acts of respect towards his parents. We are not required to fast or hear Mass every instant of our lives; but only on certain specified days.

But it is different with prohibitive commandments: "Thou shalt not kill." "Thou shalt not commit adultery." "Thou shalt not steal." "Thou shalt not covet." These not only oblige always, but demand observance at all times. We must, then, abstain at all times and in every conjuncture from murder, and theft, and adultery, and unlawful desires of every kind. Such, too, is the commandment of restitution. Though affirmative in its form, "Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar," it is in reality prohibitive, and may be formulated in this way: "Thou shalt not keep unjustly what belongs to another." The law of restitution, then, obliges not only always, but at all times.

Hence it follows that there is a difference between injustice and other classes of sin; that whereas the lat-

ter, though their guilt remains on the soul till it is forgiven by repentance, the act itself of sin is transitory; in injustice, on the contrary, not only the guilt, but the act of sin continues so long as the will cleaves to the possession of the goods unjustly taken; or, so long as restitution is refused for injury done. Every time, therefore, that the mind reverts to the obligation to make restitution, and that the will formally denies consent, a new sin of injustice is committed; so that the unjust possessor may be looked on as guilty of continual thievery and every day adds deeper and deeper guilt to his original transgression.

Moreover, there is no sin more difficult to rise out of than injustice. For goods unlawfully possessed cleave to the soul like an inseparable attribute. So long, then, as the will refuses to make restitution, so long is true repentance impossible; and as there is no remission of sin without repentance, the unjust possessor lives and dies the enemy of God.

2. O dearly beloved, these truths are very terrible, and the thought of them should fill us with fear. Let me appeal to you to pay your lawful debts; to restore ill-gotten goods; to repair the wrongs you have inflicted on others; and set things to rights with your neighbor before death comes to usher you before the tribunal of the Sovereign Judge; for then there can be no remission. No, if you were to pass your life in doing good; if you were to practise all the other virtues to perfection; if you were to perform austerities as great as those of St. Paul and St. Antony in the desert; and if you do not justly by your fellow men, you are nothing in God's sight, and you are as certain to go to hell as if you were already there; for the Holy Spirit has declared

by the mouth of the Apostle: "The unjust shall never enter the Kingdom of Heaven."

Let the fruit of my discourse then be that you resolve to act justly before God and man. Take unjustly no man's goods. Covet not the fruit of any man's labors. Restore to everyone his own. "Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar," that thus you may be able to fulfill effectually the second member of the precept: "Give to God what belongs to God."

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SKELLY, A.M.

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DATE LOANED	BORROWER'S NAME	ROOM NUMBER
	Bickford	DEC 10
	Barnes	DEC 25
	Tait	Oct. 23
	Lechler	MAR 14
	Kelley	
	Sheehan	
	Hu	
	Ke	

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